



**MISSILE ATTACK ON ZAGREB  
CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL AS TARGET  
May 3, 1995 – May 3, 2005**



**10 YEARS LATER  
PART IV AND FINAL REPORT**

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## FOREWORD

### ***"A crime that cannot be justified in any way"***

*(Jean-Jacques Gaillard, Ambassador of France to Croatia)*

In the Chronology of the Homeland War (1991–1995), the following will remain recorded:

"On May 3, 1995, at 12:10 PM, six missiles from the Serbian M-87 'Orkan' rocket system – cluster munitions banned by international conventions even against military targets – struck the Croatian capital, Zagreb. Four landed in the city centre (one of them hitting the Children's Hospital on Klaićeva Street), and two in the wider city area. One person was killed, and 53 were wounded."

This book speaks about that event in detail and in a unique way.

Ambassadors, journalists, and the global public were appalled by the senseless act... Was the hospital hit by accident?

Unfortunately, many crimes occurred during the Homeland War, despite the belief that such things could never happen. Many thought war itself was impossible – Europe and the world would surely prevent it. It seemed inconceivable and beneath any standard of military conduct or officer dignity that a nation could first be disarmed and then fiercely attacked with nearly all available modern weaponry, including those banned by international war conventions. And yet, that is precisely what happened. Some may interpret the military imbalance as a "series of unfortunate events" or "pure coincidence." It was also unimaginable that churches and hospitals could become direct targets of artillery and aircraft: over 1,400 Catholic churches were hit (380 of them completely destroyed), including cathedrals in Zadar, Šibenik, Dubrovnik, and Đakovo, as well as hospitals in Vinkovci, Osijek, Vukovar, and Pakrac. Too many hits and ruins to believe the aggressor's army acted by accident.

The question of whether the Children's Hospital in Zagreb was targeted by chance seems entirely redundant. The aggressor, defeated honourably on the battlefield, retaliated cowardly and insidiously by launching rockets at Zagreb. Those who ordered and executed the strike on the Children's Hospital in Klaićeva Street committed "a crime that cannot be justified in any way." Shocked by what he saw, the then-Ambassador of the Russian Federation to Croatia, His Excellency Mr. Leonid Kerestedzhiyants, stated: "As a grandfather, ambassador, and human being, I deeply sympathize and can say – this is unforgivable." The very thought of bombing a children's hospital evokes despair and disgust toward the perpetrators. Parents whose children were in the hospital on May 3, 1995, can best describe those feelings. Fearing for their little ones – terrified by the explosion and seeking parental protection – hundreds of parents likely lived through the most difficult moments of their lives. During the noble and professional task of removing explosive devices ("bomblets"), police bomb technician Ivan Markulin of the Zagreb Police Department was killed. He was a young father (born in 1967) of two children. The feeling of disbelief and shock was replaced by outrage. Outrage reaching the heavens – something no person, especially a parent, can ever forget.

For the hospital staff on duty, the cries and sobs of small patients – mixed with dust, smoke, debris, and the clatter of shattered hospital glass – will remain etched in memory forever.

That is why the initiative to document these moments of horror and death is so commendable. This book holds special documentary value through its records of the Children's Hospital's work during the Homeland War, the suffering of children, and reports from foreign diplomats and journalists about the hospital's shelling.

The book testifies to the courage of doctors, nurses, and other staff who continued to perform their humane duties with dedication and integrity under wartime conditions.

This valuable book is an example of how events from the Homeland War can be presented and preserved from oblivion.

Thank you to all who contributed to its publication.

MSc Ante Nazor  
Director of the Croatian Memorial–Documentation Center of the Homeland War



## **DIRECTOR'S OFFICE**

### **Zagreb, May 3, 2005 – PART IV AND FINAL REPORT**

#### **Opening Remarks – Ten Years Later...**

On May 3, 1995, at 12:10 PM, the Children's Hospital – "Klaićeva Children's Hospital" – was struck by a missile. The Ballet Building of the Croatian National Theatre in Zagreb was also hit.

It was later confirmed that the M-87 "Orkan" rocket system was used – a weapon banned by international conventions even against military targets. This is a twelve-barrel, large-calibre (262 mm) rocket launcher with a maximum range of 50 km. The missiles used in the attack on Zagreb were loaded with 288 mini-bombs, so-called "bomblets."

Some 2,400 years ago, the Greek philosopher and general Xenophon wrote *Kyrou Anabasis*, a book on military tactics and strategy. In that book – and ever since – children's hospitals, sick children, pregnant women, and ballerinas have never been considered "military strategic targets."

The exception: Zagreb, May 3, 1995, at 12:10 PM.

By marking the 10th anniversary and remembering May 3, 1995 – the day the Children's Hospital in Zagreb was shelled – we pay tribute and respect to all who were physically and psychologically harmed or offended, shocked and devastated by this shameful act, including children, parents of young patients, hospital staff, and all citizens of Zagreb, Croatia, and beyond.

Just when we had hoped for calm and believed that reason and justice had prevailed, and that the light of freedom and peace had appeared at the end of a bloody tunnel, a depraved and desperate mind chose a terrorist act unprecedented in the history of the civilized world (we believe that this "mind" has a name and surname).

Without literary ambition or political judgment, we are grateful to have recognized in time the need to record facts and personal observations, careers, and texts to ensure high-quality documentation for future generations of historians, analysts (and) politicians – and for the youth of then and now, so they may assess their own history.

The first, second, and third interim reports – and now this "completed fourth" in hardcover – are the result of that effort. The notes were made in the way we felt or experienced (subjectively or objectively) those tragic and sorrowful events.

Some of the perpetrators or commanders responsible are now facing justice and awaiting appropriate punishment. They demonstrated their "courage" three months later by fleeing from the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia, which – through the legitimate military-police operation "Storm" – liberated Croatian territory recognized under international law. Clearly, it was much easier to wage war against sick children, pregnant women, and ballerinas than against Croatian soldiers and police officers.

No court can judge their conscience, for it will be difficult to penetrate it.

This record book will, of course, remain archived at the Children's Hospital Zagreb and is available to all who wish to consult it – and as an incentive to mark future "anniversary" commemorations.

The book is primarily intended for young people and all others of goodwill, regardless of nationality, race, religion, gender, age, or citizenship – as a document of an event that happened, but should never have.

Primarius Ivan Fattorini, MD,  
Paediatric Surgeon  
Director of the Children's Hospital Zagreb



## **CHILDREN’S HOSPITAL IN THE HOMELAND WAR**

### **AUTHORS:**

Primarius Ivan Fattorini, MD, Paediatric Surgeon, Director of the Children’s Hospital Zagreb and President of the Croatian Society for Paediatric Surgery Zoran Bahtijarević, MD, Paediatric Surgeon, Head of Operating Theatres Vladimir Šolta, LL.B., Head of the Director’s Office

In November 1989, the United Nations adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The preamble of the Convention states that it “reflects the moral stance of humanity on every child’s right to live and grow up in a spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, equality, and solidarity.” A special section of the Convention addresses the protection of children in war and armed conflict. The former state was among the first signatories of this document, and the Republic of Croatia signed it shortly after gaining independence and international recognition.

Unfortunately, the events of the Homeland War would soon demonstrate that the “moral stance of humanity” stumbled amid the ruins of Vukovar, Vinkovci, Sisak, Karlovac, Gospić, Šibenik, Zadar, Dubrovnik, and other Croatian hero cities — and ultimately collapsed alongside Bosanska Posavina, Bosnia Srebrena, Herzeg-Bosnia, Sarajevo, and Srebrenica. In these wars, virtually all rights of the child were trampled: there was hardly a trace of “peace, dignity, tolerance, equality, and solidarity,” except in rare instances.

International organizations and institutions showed a complete lack of understanding for the nature of the war in Croatia and later in Bosnia and Herzegovina. As a result, during the first months — and indeed the entire first year of the war — aid was directed to UNICEF’s office in Belgrade, failing to recognize that assistance was urgently needed in Croatia. Moreover, the international community proved entirely unprepared for war in the heart of Europe; the first medical and other aid kits that began arriving in Croatia in autumn 1991 contained antimalarial drugs and mosquito repellents — at a time when what we needed were tents, stoves, blankets, and warm clothing.

Throughout the war, the slowness and inertia of major international humanitarian organizations, along with their perpetual need for complex bureaucratic procedures, often caused delays in medical assistance — not only for wounded children.

Nevertheless, in December 1991, the Children’s Hospital Zagreb — then known as the Institute for the Protection of Mother and Child — was recognized by UNICEF as a Regional Hospital Facility for the care of children who were victims of war in Croatia, and later in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

From the very beginning of the war, the hospital leadership recognized the specific nature of the Homeland War: 64% of victims were civilians, compared to 19% in World War I, 48% in World War II, and 49% in the Vietnam War. Children are the most vulnerable segment of the civilian population, and their suffering strikes at the heart of the nation itself. Therefore, at the onset of the war, the Children’s Hospital in Klaićeva Street established a Registry of Child Victims of War, which — despite numerous challenges — was maintained persistently and with the highest possible accuracy until the end of the war. Only children for whom clear evidence of suffering existed were included in the Registry. The numbers spoke louder than words; the names of dead and wounded children were a stronger weapon than those that had harmed them.

During the Homeland War, the Main Medical Headquarters of the Republic of Croatia was not faced with deep front lines — the wounded reached war hospitals within just a few hours. Initially, they were treated in the nearest healthcare facilities according to echelon levels (third echelon — general

hospital level), and when battlefield and transport conditions allowed, they were transferred to the best war hospitals (fourth echelon — clinical level).

The Children’s Hospital Zagreb served as a fourth-echelon war hospital — the final level of care.

In addition, during the Homeland War, the Children’s Hospital Zagreb had the primary responsibility of requesting and organizing international assistance from related medical institutions for reconstructive surgery and rehabilitation.

**Table 1 Killed and Injured Children in Croatia (1991–1995), by Gender**

KILLED			INJURED		
GENDER	NUMBER	%	GENDER	NUMBER	%
Male	194	73	Male	789	76
Female	73	27	Female	255	24
TOTAL	267	100	TOTAL	1044	100

**Table 2 Killed and Injured Children in Croatia (1991–1995), by Age Group**

KILLED			INJURED		
AGE	NUMBER	%	AGE	NUMBER	%
0-6	40	15	0-6	156	15
7-10	45	15	7-10	179	17
11-14	72	27	11-14	308	30
15-17	95	36	15-17	384	37
Unknown	15	5	Unknown	17	1
TOTAL	267	100	TOTAL	1044	100

**Table 3 Killed and Injured Children in Croatia (1991–1995), by Cause**

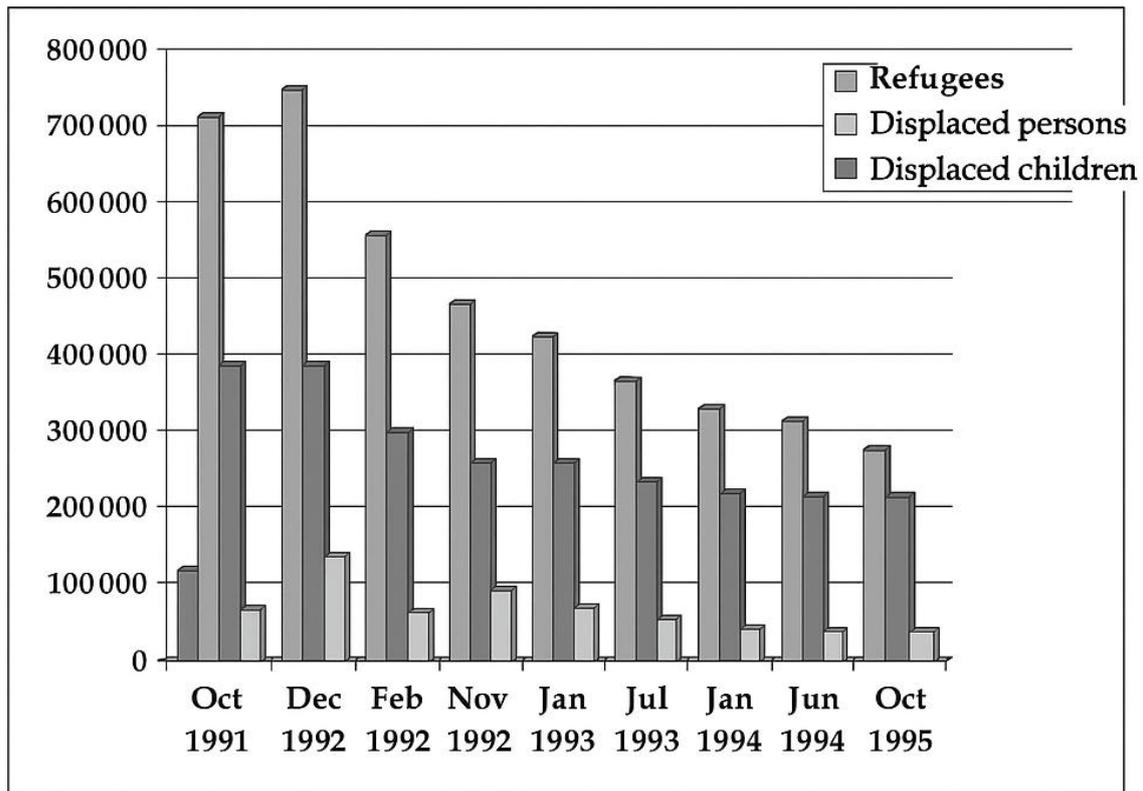
CAUSE OF INJURY	KILLED		INJURED	
	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%
EXPLOSIVE DEVICES	131	49.4	553	53.0
GUNSHOT WOUNDS	82	30.7	267	25.6
BURNS	4	1.5	52	5.1
OTHER	7	2.6	51	4.9
UNKNOWN	43	15.7	120	11.5
TOTAL	267	100	1044	100

**Table 4 Injured Children in Croatia (1991–1995), by Injury Location**

INJURY LOCALIZATION	NUMBER	%
HEAD AND NECK	202	19.33
UPPER EXTREMITIES	212	20.27
LOWER EXTREMITIES	249	23.82
TORSO	171	16.41
MULTIPLE INJURIES	73	7.00
UNKNOWN	137	13.17
TOTAL	1044	100

As a consequence of war-related injuries, 188 children were left with varying degrees of physical disability (56 with very severe, 92 with severe, and 40 with moderate physical disability – see Table 5). In addition, 5,497 children lost one parent, and 74 children lost both parents, while by the end of the war the parents of 907 children were considered missing. A total of 585 educational institutions were destroyed (131 kindergartens, 365 primary schools, and 89 secondary schools), along with 16 child welfare institutions and 30 paediatric medical care facilities.

At the same time, a process of ethnic cleansing began, which the international community would only later recognize and sanction. People were expelled from their homes and lived in inhumane conditions in refugee settlements and camps. In Croatia, there were more than one million displaced persons and refugees, and nearly half of them were children.



In the first year of the war alone, the Children's Hospital in Klaićeva provided 40,000 more medical services than usual, primarily to refugee and displaced children, with an increase of 10% to 15% in each subsequent year of the war. In some departments, such as oncology, half of the treated children came from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

At the same time, the need was recognized to send medical teams — primarily surgical — into zones of direct conflict; it was not practical to wait for wounded children and civilians to arrive in Zagreb, especially under conditions where transporting injured children from besieged cities could take several days. Paediatric surgeons and other medical staff from Klaićeva covered most Croatian battlefields as part of mobile surgical units and war hospitals organized by the Medical Command of Croatia, offering their expertise and care to wounded children (and adults) in Bosnia and Herzegovina as well. The surgical team from Klaićeva worked in the Vukovar hospital, side by side with Vukovar's doctors and nurses, from the very beginning of the war until the occupation of Vukovar. Its members, along with other hospital staff and wounded patients, were captured and taken to Serbia (Yugoslavia).

**From the perspective of service organization specifics, the war for our hospital can be divided into four phases:**

1. The war in Croatia
2. The war in Bosnia and Herzegovina
3. A state of neither war nor peace
4. The post-war period

During the war, the Clinic treated 213 wounded children, of which 97 were primarily treated in our hospital. The remaining children were evacuated from war and regional hospitals, where they had received initial care, and were transferred for secondary and tertiary surgical treatment. With pride and satisfaction, we emphasize that not a single wounded child brought to our institution died, meaning our child mortality rate for war-related injuries was zero (0%). This was conditionally linked to both effective and challenging logistics (transport). Above all, this outcome is owed to the excellent cooperation and teamwork of paediatric surgeons, anaesthesiologists, intensivists, nurses, technicians, and other medical staff.

The type and nature of injuries varied according to the phases of the war. In the early stages, injuries from artillery, infantry weapons, and aerial bombs predominated. Toward the end of the war, the proportion of injuries caused by landmines, accidents, and self-inflicted wounds increased.

**Table 5          Disability in children as a consequence of war injuries in Croatia 1991–1995 (by degree of disability)**

DEGREE OF DISABILITY	NUMBER	%
VERY SEVERE (70%-100%)	56	29.79
SEVERE (30%-70%)	92	48.94
MODERATE (10%-30%)	40	21.27
TOTAL	188	100

**Table 6**            **Wounded children primarily treated at the Children’s Hospital Zagreb 1991–1995**

TYPE OF INJURY	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
AIR BOMB	5 (5%)	2 (2%)	7 (7%)
SHELLING	32 (33%)	13 (14%)	45 (46%)
GUNSHOT WOUND	4 (4%)	6 (6%)	10(10%)
ACCIDENT	12 (12%)	2 (2%)	14(15%)
SELF-INFLICTED INJURY	13 (14%)	-	13 (14%)
LANDMINES	4 (4%)	-	4 (4%)
TERRORIST ATTACK	3 (3%)	1 (1%)	4 (4%)
TOTAL	73 (75%)	24 (25%)	97(100%)

## WAR IN CROATIA

Due to the nature of the Homeland War, which lacked defined front lines and was fought in populated areas where the aggressor did not choose the time, place, or target of attack, children were victims from the very beginning.

It quickly became clear that waiting for wounded children and other casualties was not sufficient, so mobile surgical teams were formed at the Paediatric Surgery Clinic of the Children's Hospital Zagreb, consisting of two surgeons, a scrub nurse, an anaesthesiologist, and an anaesthesia technician.

The first teams provided care to refugee settlements and displaced persons, and supplied the war hospital in Dugave, Zagreb, and other locations according to the official list on page 9. At the same time, since August 1991, our teams were regularly stationed at the Vukovar hospital.

After the occupation of Vukovar, our surgical teams worked for a time in other war hospitals, and during 1992, 1993, and 1994 they covered the war hospital in Đakovo. Simultaneously, other surgical teams assisted in Gospić and Karlovac, and after the immediate combat activities subsided in early 1992, our surgeons provided field surgical care to military units on Velebit.

Throughout this period, paediatric surgeons acted as war surgeons, and their work was not limited to children — on the contrary, they treated the full spectrum of war-related surgical cases, including all types of injuries and emergency surgical conditions in adults.

Hospital operations did not slow down during this time; in fact, in the first year of the war alone, Klaićeva performed 40,000 more medical procedures than in peacetime years. Under constant air raid alerts, the hospital was evacuated 52 times during the autumn and winter of 1991 to its own nuclear shelters built beneath the new hospital wing. Evacuating 300 small patients and around 100 staff members took less than 20 minutes — all children were cared for with extraordinary effort by the staff. In conditions of shortage of basic medical supplies, improvisation was necessary even in operating rooms — for example, three incompatible external fixators were combined to create one functional device. Some children, especially those requiring extended hospital stays, were referred for continued treatment to relevant medical institutions abroad (Germany, France, England, Italy, USA ...). During this time, the first international surgical teams arrived to assist our surgeons, and by the end of 1992, teams from Germany, Austria, Sweden, and the USA had operated at Klaićeva. In later years, teams from Italy, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom joined them, and cooperation — especially with American and Swedish colleagues — continued throughout the war (13 top surgical teams from the USA operated at the hospital during the war) and continues to this day.

During this period, children of all nationalities and religions from all regions were treated at the hospital, as occupied territories had not yet been clearly delineated, and the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) clearly did not choose its areas of military engagement.

At the same time, strong international activity was underway; a message was sent to the world: children are victims of war, the children's hospital is at war! The hospital became a centre for the distribution of medical and other humanitarian aid throughout Croatia, and soon became a regional hub for contacts with many international institutions, governmental and non-governmental organizations, and individuals. There was hardly a corner of the world from which people willing to help did not arrive. Unfortunately, some arrived with less noble intentions — it soon became clear that certain countries and institutions were using humanitarian aid as a cover to dispose of medical and

other waste, including toxic materials. In December 1991, for example, we received a large shipment of penicillin dating back to the 1950s.

Under such conditions, the hospital successfully transitioned from peacetime to wartime organization and assumed the role of the leading paediatric care institution in the Republic of Croatia.

## **WAR IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOWINA**

Just as the conflicts in Croatia began to subside in a state of uneasy truce, war broke out in the neighbouring country — even bloodier, dirtier, and more inhumane. International organizations and humanitarian institutions relied on their already established cooperation with our hospital and used it as a base for their activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Children's Hospital Zagreb, particularly the Paediatric Surgery Clinic, became a centre for the evacuation of wounded and seriously ill children from Bosnia and Herzegovina. Virtually all children with solid malignant tumours who managed to be evacuated from that country were treated in the oncology department, then part of the Paediatric Surgery Clinic. Through various means, most often via SFOR aircraft, wounded children of all nationalities from all regions of Bosnia and Herzegovina were brought to the hospital. On several occasions, children from besieged Bihać and even Banja Luka were brought to the hospital for treatment by taxi, and after completing treatment, returned to those places in the same way. At the same time, our medical teams — surgical units expanded to include paediatricians — were continuously active throughout the war in Tomislavgrad, Mostar, Žepče, and Nova Bila.

Due to the need to care for large numbers of refugee camps and frequent surges of refugees in various locations, the Children's Hospital Zagreb organized the acquisition of a medical bus equipped with a room for minor surgical procedures and childbirth, as well as dental equipment — the "Clinic on Wheels." It proved especially valuable during refugee crises in Turnje near Karlovac and in Vrginmost, when a column of refugees from Bihać was blocked and spent weeks or even months in impossible health conditions. It was also active during the refugee crisis near Davor, when nearly all non-Serb residents were expelled by raft from Banja Luka and Bosanska Posavina, and our teams received refugees for weeks.

Meanwhile, a surgical team was stationed at the hospital in Đakovo, and teams were dispatched to other cities as needed. The main institution increasingly focused on normalizing operations, restoring educational and scientific activities alongside medical services, and began working toward international recognition of the Croatian Society of Paediatric Surgery (HLZ), headquartered at the Paediatric Surgery Clinic. Transformation of the departments and institutes into a modern clinic began (e.g., separating primary from secondary and tertiary healthcare), and the hospital was officially named the Children's Hospital Zagreb.

During this period, we began to observe an increase in injuries resulting from accidents and self-harm, largely due to the easy availability of large quantities of personal weapons and leftover arms from the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA), with children increasingly injured during play.

## **NEITHER WAR NOR PEACE**

Throughout 1994, and until the military-police operations "Flash" and "Storm" by the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia, the hospital operated in a state of neither war nor peace. In Croatia, minor military actions occurred, but a ceasefire was generally maintained under UNPROFOR control. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, SFOR increasingly took control, and the conflicts there also began to subside. In Croatia, injuries among children increasingly resulted from careless and untrained handling of weapons, and injuries from landmine explosions and explosive devices became more frequent.

With medical teams now permanently active in Eastern Slavonia and Nova Bila, the hospital gradually returned to peacetime operations. This was the phase of greatest international activity for the Croatian Society of Paediatric Surgery (HDDK) under HLZ. Preparations began for the First Croatian Congress of Paediatric Surgery with international participation (Brijuni, 1995), wartime surgical experiences were summarized and analysed, and HDDK actively participated in founding the European Union of Paediatric Surgeons (EUPSA) and the Mediterranean Association of Paediatric Surgeons (MAPS).

During the founding of the European Union of Paediatric Surgeons in Graz, on May 3, 1995, at 12:10 p.m., the “moral stance of humanity” once again failed the test of wartime reality. News spread worldwide that the Children’s Hospital Zagreb (Klaićeva) had been hit by rocket fire. The damage was extensive — the paediatric dispensary and the Psychotrauma Center were practically destroyed, and the operating rooms were significantly damaged. One person was killed in the hospital grounds, and seven were wounded. It was a miracle that no child in the hospital was injured, even though the attack was not preceded by an air raid alert and the children had not been moved to the nuclear shelter. Once again, the hospital became a war hospital. Paediatric surgeons and anaesthesiologists treated passers-by wounded near the hospital, as well as injured members of the Croatian National Theatre ballet ensemble and the national folk ensemble “Lado,” who were caught in the attack during rehearsal. During those days, when Zagreb was under terrorist rocket attacks, wounded children arrived at the Children’s Hospital — this time injured on the streets of Zagreb.

After Operation “Bljesak,” the situation calmed, and in that state we were caught by “Storm,” the final liberation of the occupied regions of our homeland. Alongside fellow surgeons (once again with their units), the hospital was ready to receive the wounded, and our surgical teams followed the advance of the Croatian Army.

## **AFTER THE WAR**

After the successful completion of Operation Storm, our surgical teams returned to the hospital, and there was no longer a need for mobile or stationed surgical units in Našice or Bosnia and Herzegovina. The clinic underwent another transformation — this time final — from a wartime hospital into a modern clinical institution providing comprehensive secondary and tertiary healthcare for children. Nevertheless, in the early post-war years, accidents and injuries caused by play, misfortune, or self-harm among children remained frequent. Over time, as the availability of weapons decreased, such injuries also declined. However, the persistent threat of minefields remains, sadly brought back to attention every time a child is injured.

## **SURGICAL EXPERIENCES**

During our four years of active involvement in the medical care of the wounded, especially children, we arrived at the following insights — or confirmations of already known principles of war medicine:

- Infections of war wounds were less frequent in children than in adults, and those that did occur were milder and easier to treat.
- Tissue vitality is significantly higher in children than in adults.
- The ability of wounds to heal is markedly better and faster in children.

- The area requiring debridement and necrosectomy was considerably smaller in children than in adults.
- Primary and delayed primary closure of wounds after war injuries in children was not only possible but also desirable, especially in aesthetically sensitive regions.
- The frequency of limb amputations in children was significantly lower compared to adults, partly due to the aforementioned healing capacity and partly due to intensified medical efforts given the sensitivity of amputation in childhood.
- Primary intestinal anastomosis was generally possible with very good outcomes.
- Abdominal cavity drainage in children was most often unnecessary.
- Gentle and precise surgical technique by paediatric surgeons contributed to rapid healing and recovery of wounds even in adult patients, and paediatric surgeons proved themselves to be competent war surgeons.

It is worth noting that some of these principles apply only under clinical conditions and when patients are under continuous supervision.

## List of Clinical Staff Who Served in Field Assignments During the Homeland War Based on deployment records from the Crisis Headquarters of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Croatia — Clinic Archive

### 1. Božena Bacani

**Father's name:** Stjepan **JMBG:** 1112958335039 **Title:** Nurse – anaesthesia technician

- Đakovo: 31 Jan – 22 Feb 1992

### 2. Vesna Balažević

**Father's name:** Stjepan **JMBG:** 2605968339334 **Title:** Nurse – scrub nurse

- Vukovar: 8 Aug – 22 Aug 1991
- Vukovar: 25 Sep – 22 Nov 1991

### 3. Ana Barbir

**Father's name:** Antun **JMBG:** 0302956335023 **Title:** Nurse – scrub nurse

- Đakovo: 16 Jan – 1 Feb 1992
- Dugave: 5 Oct – 14 Oct 1993

### 4. Jagoda Bevandić

**Father's name:** Drago **JMBG:** 0112955335158 **Title:** Senior nurse – scrub nurse

- Vukovar: 8 Aug – 22 Aug 1991
- Đakovo: 25 Nov – 8 Feb 1993

### 5. Suada Birnbauer-Mulešković

**Father's name:** Hasan **JMBG:** 2703963307169 **Title:** Nurse

- Gašinci–Đakovo: 10 Jun – 24 Jun 1993

### 6. Vesna Božičević

**Father's name:** Anton **JMBG:** 2506970335062 **Title:** Nurse

- Gašinci: 23 Jun – 7 Jul 1992
- Gašinci: 13 Oct – 27 Oct 1992

### 7. Mile Brajković

**Father's name:** Luka **JMBG:** 1604956330137 **Title:** Anaesthesia technician

- Đakovo: 2 Dec – 18 Dec 1991

### 8. Irenko Cigit

**Father's name:** Stjepan **JMBG:** 2703947330061 **Title:** Specialist paediatric surgeon

- Đakovo: 11 Sep – 2 Oct 1991
- Đakovo: 20 Oct – 18 Nov 1991
- Đakovo: 2 Dec – 18 Dec 1991
- Đakovo: 16 Jan – 1 Feb 1992
- Županja: 22 Jun – 1 Jul 1992
- Cerna: 1 Jul – 8 Jul 1992
- Đakovo: 22 Mar – 5 Apr 1993
- Lukovo Šugarje (Velebit): 6 Jan – 10 Jan 1994
- Lukovo Šugarje (Velebit): 31 Jan – 2 Mar 1994

### 9. Jasna Čepin-Bogović

**Father's name:** Antun **JMBG:** 2105949335074 **Title:** Specialist paediatrician

- Gašinci: 24 Jun – 9 Jul 1992

### 10. Ružica Duplančić

**Father's name:** Stjepan **JMBG:** 0307936335061 **Title:** Specialist paediatrician

- Gašinci: 10 Jun – 24 Jun 1993

### 11. Joško Filipušić

**Father's name:** Radomir **JMBG:** 1902958330119 **Title:** Specialist paediatric surgeon

- Đakovo: 22 Mar – 6 Apr 1993
- Tomislavgrad: 16 Oct – 4 Nov 1994
- Dugave: October 1991

### 12. Zorica Gregurić-Ganić

**Father's name:** Mile **JMBG:** 0305968335117 **Title:** Nurse – anaesthesia technician

- Vukovar: 8 Aug – 22 Aug 1991
- Vukovar: 25 Sep – 22 Nov 1991

### 13. Dubravko Gogolja

**Father's name:** Dražen **JMBG:** 3011944330057 **Title:** Specialist paediatric surgeon

- Dugave: 5 Oct 1992 – 19 Feb 1993
- Đakovo: 17 Jul – 2 Aug 1993

### 14. Vilka Hrešić-Kršulović

**Father's name:** Đuro **JMBG:** 2211950396219 **Title:** Specialist paediatrician

- Gašinci–Đakovo: July 1992

### **15. Branko Javorović**

**Father's name:** Dane **JMBG:** 2611940330048 **Title:** Specialist anaesthesiologist

- Osijek (child evacuation): 1 Dec 1991
- Đakovo: 2 Dec – 19 Dec 1991
- Županja: 22 Jun – 8 Jul 1992

### **16. Stanko Kušt**

**Father's name:** Stanko **JMBG:** 0907947330239 **Title:** Specialist anaesthesiologist

- Vukovar: 8 Aug – 22 Aug 1991
- Vukovar: 25 Sep – 22 Nov 1991
- Đakovo: 17 Jul – 2 Aug 1992

### **17. Dubravka Latinčić**

**Father's name:** Marijan **JMBG:** 2704949335156 **Title:** Nurse – anaesthesia technician

- Đakovo: 16 Jan – 1 Feb 1992
- Đakovo: 17 Jul – 2 Aug 1992
- Đakovo: 25 Jan – 8 Feb 1993
- Dugave: 5 Oct – 14 Oct 1991

### **18. Miroslav Leko**

**Father's name:** Ivan **JMBG:** 2004948330221 **Title:** Specialist paediatric surgeon

- Tomislavgrad: 11 Oct – 3 Nov 1993

### **19. Branka Maldini**

**Father's name:** Marko **JMBG:** 1610952335134 **Title:** Specialist anaesthesiologist

- Đakovo: 16 Jan – 1 Feb 1992
- Dugave: 5 Oct – 14 Oct 1991

### **20. Albina Marič**

**Father's name:** Ivo **JMBG:** 3108965335117 **Title:** Nurse – scrub nurse

- Đakovo: 17 Dec – 30 Dec 1991
- Đakovo: 13 Jul – 2 Aug 1992

### **21. Željko Milić**

**Father's name:** Petar **JMBG:** 1012935330094 **Title:** Specialist paediatric surgeon

- Vukovar: 28 Jul – 8 Aug 1991
- Đakovo: 17 Dec – 28 Dec 1991

- Đakovo: 31 Jan – 22 Feb 1992

## 22. Juraj Prežigalo

**Father's name:** Lacko **JMBG:** 0705941330081 **Title:** Specialist anaesthesiologist

- Vukovar: 28 Jul – 8 Aug 1991
- Đakovo: 11 Sep – 2 Oct 1991
- Đakovo: 20 Oct – 18 Nov 1991
- Đakovo: 31 Jan – 22 Feb 1992
- Đakovo: 25 Jan – 8 Feb 1993

## 23. Ljerka Radešić

**Father's name:** Antun **JMBG:** 1808942335068 **Title:** Specialist anaesthesiologist

- Dugave: 5 Oct – 14 Oct 1991
- Đakovo: 17 Dec – 28 Dec 1991

## 24. Goran Rašić

**Father's name:** Ranko **JMBG:** 2005966330111 **Title:** Anaesthesia technician

- Vukovar: 28 Jul – 8 Aug 1991
- Đakovo: 17 Dec – 28 Dec 1991

## 25. Leposava Salečić

**Father's name:** Ljudevit **JMBG:** 1308957339326 **Title:** Anaesthesia technician

- Đakovo: 11 Sep – 2 Oct 1991
- Đakovo: 20 Oct – 18 Nov 1991
- Županja–Cerna: 22 Jun – 8 Jul 1992
- Đakovo: 22 Mar – 4 Apr 1993

## 26. Anda Šarengradac

**Father's name:** Martin **JMBG:** 2008958335146 **Title:** Nurse – scrub nurse

- Đakovo: 22 Mar – 4 Apr 1993

## 27. Zvonimir Vrtar

**Father's name:** Boris **JMBG:** 0403947330036 **Title:** Specialist paediatric surgeon

- Dugave: 6 Oct – 14 Oct 1991
- Đakovo: 25 Jan – 8 Feb 1993

## 28. Stojan Vukšić

**Father's name:** Milan **JMBG:** 1905940330056 **Title:** Senior medical technician (VŠS)

- Đakovo: 22 Mar – 5 Apr 1993

### 29. Tomislav Vlahović

**Father's name:** Josip **JMBG:** 2606945330085 **Title:** Specialist paediatric surgeon

- Vukovar: 8 Aug – 22 Aug 1991
- Vukovar: 25 Sep – 20 Nov 1991

### 30. Nediljka Žakula

**Father's name:** Mate **JMBG:** 0810950335094 **Title:** Senior nurse – scrub nurse

- Vukovar: 28 Jul – 8 Aug 1991
- Đakovo: 31 Jan – 22 Feb 1992
- Dugave: 5 Oct – 14 Oct 1993

**However, the participation of healthcare and other staff of the Children's Hospital Zagreb and their contribution during the Homeland War (1991–1995) is far greater than what the attached data suggests. Below is a brief explanation.**

1. Certain staff members of the Hospital were members of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia during various periods from 1991 to 1995, and some were decorated. For understandable legal (military-security) reasons, the Hospital does not possess data on their field activities, except for confirmation from the Ministry of Defence (for salary reimbursement purposes) that they were serving in the Croatian Armed Forces during specific periods.
2. The majority of our staff had a work obligation within the Hospital. In addition to regular duties, the Hospital provided care for wounded and ill refugee children from across the Republic of Croatia and parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Hospital Director and Management acted as the main coordinators of all activities.

During air raid alerts in the City of Zagreb, we evacuated the entire hospital into our own nuclear shelters on 52 occasions and continued working. It is known that on 3 May 1995, the Hospital was targeted by rocket fire. However, since the City of Zagreb was not officially declared a war zone, this work is not considered fieldwork or service in a war hospital.

3. The Hospital organized a wide range of actions, including the coordination of care for wounded and ill refugee children in relevant partner healthcare institutions abroad, assistance in medicines, medical equipment and supplies, food, clothing, and even vehicles. One notable example was the summer holiday for 50 young children from Vukovar in Benidorm, Spain. All of this was carried out with the approval of the Crisis Headquarters of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Croatia, through which most of the aid was directed to healthcare institutions in Vinkovci, Đakovo, Nova Gradiška, University Hospital Dubrava, University Hospital Sisters of Mercy, etc. Only the most essential items were retained for the Hospital's own needs. In executing these actions, healthcare and other staff of the Hospital were active in the field — from Spain, Germany, and Austria to Đakovo and Vinkovci — as organizers or direct participants, often during the most difficult wartime days. This work is considered humanitarian activity.

4. In 1992, the Hospital succeeded in obtaining a specially equipped vehicle — a bus with medical equipment and independent energy sources — from American donors, intended for autonomous field operation. The vehicle (popularly known as the “Hospital on Wheels”), staffed by medical teams from the Hospital and driven by Veljko Jakopčević, operated in various locations across Croatia such as Turanj, Davor, and Daruvar, providing medical assistance to refugees and others in need. Due to the humanitarian intent of the donors, the vehicle could not be used within the framework of military-police operations of the Croatian Armed Forces, and the entire activity was recorded as humanitarian aid or support to other healthcare institutions (Karlovac General Hospital, Slavonski Brod General Hospital, etc.). With the consent of the donors and the competent Ministry of the Republic of Croatia, the vehicle was made available to the Japanese humanitarian organization AAR and in 1996 was used in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Goražde), after which it was handed over to the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Croatia for demining purposes.
5. As previously stated, healthcare staff of the Hospital worked both within the hospital and in field locations during the war years — including Mostar, Nova Bila, Davor, Turanj, Gaza, Daruvar, Knin, and Žepče — and were an integral part of the Hospital’s activities during that time:

Iva Avberšek, Senior Nurse – Scrub Nurse

Zoran Bahtijarević, MD, Specialist Paediatric Surgeon

Mislav Bastić, MSc, MD, Specialist Paediatric Surgeon

Jasna Čepin-Bogović, MD, Specialist Paediatrician

Vesna Božičević, Nurse

Vlasta Đuranović, MSc, MD, Specialist Paediatrician

Vilka Hrešić-Kršulović, MSc, MD, Specialist Paediatrician

Ružica Jagetić, Laboratory Technician

Branko Javorović, Primarius, MSc, MD, Specialist Anaesthesiologist

Dražen Karnaš, MD

Sanja Kijac, Nurse

Sanja Kolaček, Professor, PhD, MD, Specialist Paediatrician

Branka Kuliš, MD, Specialist Ophthalmologist

Davorica Marić, Laboratory Technician

Juraj Prežigalo, MD, Specialist Anaesthesiologist

Snježana Slabinjac-Kordiš, Senior Nurse

Jasna Soršak, Laboratory Technician

Milan Stanić, MD, Specialist Paediatrician

Neda Striber, MD, Specialist Ophthalmologist

Slavica Šafran, Nurse

Mirjana Vurnek, Senior Nurse

This text aims to clarify the role of healthcare professionals (not only) from the Children's Hospital Zagreb in the functioning of the healthcare system during the Homeland War. We believe that comprehensive and well-organized logistical support — including medical services — significantly influenced the outcome of the Homeland War.

References:

1. Archival materials of the Children's Hospital Zagreb
2. Data from the Crisis Headquarters of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare of the Republic of Croatia

# III TEMPORARY



# REPORT



***"As a grandfather, an ambassador, and a human being, I deeply sympathize and I can say:  
This cannot be forgiven."***

*His Excellency Mr. Leonid Kerestedzhiyants,*

*Ambassador of the Russian Federation to the Republic of Croatia,*

*during his visit to the Children's Hospital Zagreb, shortly after the hospital was shelled.*

# MISSILE ATTACK ON ZAGREB CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL AS TARGET

## FOREWORD

Throughout its historical and social development, humankind has passed through various evolutionary stages. Conflicts — large or small — between individuals and nations were most often resolved in very concrete ways: through cold diplomacy or open warfare. Yet even then, certain rules existed — a code, a sense of chivalry — which implied adherence to ethical principles, even in times of war.

The citizens of Zagreb, the capital of the Republic of Croatia, were confronted with the opposite in the harshest possible way. Some of them suffered especially — the young patients of the Children's Hospital and the ballet artists of the Croatian National Theatre.

On May 3rd, 1995, shortly after noon, Zagreb was struck by four ORKAN missiles — cluster bombs banned under international conventions. One of these bombs, containing around two hundred “bomblets,” hit our hospital, causing significant material damage and injuring several parents and two hospital staff — a scrub nurse and a mechanical technician. By chance or miracle, not a single child in the Hospital was wounded. Thanks to the swift response and excellent training of our staff, the young patients were well cared for and remained physically unharmed.

It is well known what emotional turmoil children experience when separated from their parents and hospitalized. To this, add the fear and uncertainty caused by exploding shells, the shattering and spraying of glass above children's beds. I believe no further comment is needed.

In his effort to help us as quickly as possible, one brave man lost his life: a police bomb technician, himself a father of two, was killed while dismantling one of the many “bomblets” scattered across the roof and courtyard of the Hospital. This terrorist attack on the hospital prompted many diplomats, public figures, and journalists to witness first-hand the irrationality of the event.

Our intention, by collecting facts and photographs of the incident, along with the impressions of witnesses, is to highlight a barbarism that cannot be justified by anything — with the hope that it will never be repeated, anywhere.

This document will be preserved in the archives of the Children's Hospital Zagreb, as a permanent testimony to remind future generations of the circumstances under which a free, independent, and democratic Republic of Croatia was born.

*Primarius Ivan Fattorini, MD*

*Specialist in Paediatric Surgery*

*Director of the Children's Hospital Zagreb*



## **MISSILE ATTACK ON ZAGREB CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL AS TARGET**

### **CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL ZAGREB**

The Children's Hospital Zagreb is Croatia's central paediatric hospital, a specialized institution which, in addition to its core medical responsibilities, also fulfils scientific, educational, and methodological functions in the field of healthcare for children and mothers in Croatia.

It comprises the Department of Paediatrics and the Department of Paediatric Surgery, both teaching bases of the University of Zagreb School of Medicine, as well as the Department of Paediatric Orthopaedics, the Department of Anaesthesia, Resuscitation and Intensive Care, the Department of Laboratory Diagnostics, the Department of Radiological and Ultrasound Diagnostics, and the Department of Gynaecology and Youth Health Education.

From the very beginning of the aggression against the Republic of Croatia, the Hospital — although geographically distant from the front lines — was forced to adapt its peacetime structure to wartime conditions.

A Commission for the Child in War was established with the aim of providing comprehensive healthcare to children during wartime, collecting and distributing humanitarian aid for children — including medicines, food, and clothing — and educating professionals, particularly in the needs and challenges faced by children in war.

Mobile surgical teams, formed and organized within the Hospital, participated in frontline care (in Vukovar and Đakovo, for example), while teams of surgeons and paediatricians became part of Zagreb's defence system.

The primary task — treating wounded children and providing healthcare to sick children (refugees and displaced persons) — was coordinated with all medical institutions in Croatia and with many abroad. A Registry for Children – Victims of War was established to enable continuous monitoring of the physical and social suffering of children. Close cooperation was developed with the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Croatia, the Ministry of Social Welfare, and the Office for Refugees and Displaced Persons of the Government of the Republic of Croatia.

During the aggression against Croatia, beginning in 1991, hundreds of children with war injuries and thousands of sick children — refugees and displaced persons from various parts of Croatia — were treated in the Hospital's wards.

In addition, since the beginning of the war in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, wounded and ill children from our neighbouring country — including those with malignant diseases — were treated free of charge. Many were brought directly to our Hospital from the site of injury, with the assistance of UNPROFOR, UNICEF, UNHCR, IRC, or other international organizations.

In the first year of the aggression against Croatia alone, by December 1992, more than 40,000 additional medical services were provided to approximately 14,500 children — 5,300 of whom were displaced persons from Croatia and more than 9,200 refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina. That year, an additional 602 patients — refugees and displaced persons — were hospitalized and treated, 402 of whom were refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina. Among them were more than one hundred wounded children, including 45 from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

From that time to the present, 10 to 15 percent of all our medical services have been provided to sick refugee or displaced children, mostly from Bosnia and Herzegovina. In some departments (such as the Oncology Department), the proportion has reached — and continues to reach — up to 50 percent.

Staff of our Hospital succeeded in organizing additional treatment (medical care in third countries, rehabilitation, prosthetics, etc.) for a large number of these children. This was not limited to patients treated in our hospital, but extended to many children treated in other hospitals as well.

Given that the healthcare system — like the rest of Croatia — was severely damaged by the war, we have continuously struggled with shortages of medicines, surgical dressings, and medical supplies. Our medical equipment has been almost entirely depleted by these additional efforts and often operates at the limits of functionality. Nevertheless, not a single child — regardless of nationality or religious affiliation — was denied medical care. On the contrary, our work and the quality of our medical services were praised by members of thirteen international medical teams who stayed at our hospital.

*Vlasta Hiršl-Hećej, MSc, MD*

*Head of the Department of Epidemiology and Health Statistics*

## CHRONICLE OF TRAGIC EVENTS

### DAY 1 — MAY 3

Following attacks by armed Serbian groups on April 28 and 29 against travellers on the Zagreb–Lipovac highway, another assault occurred on May 1 near the village of Ožegovac on the Pakrac–Požega road. Two people were wounded. This prompted Croatian police forces to launch an operation at 5:30 a.m. on May 1, aimed at securing free movement and preventing terrorist attacks on travellers along the highway between Novska and Nova Gradiška. That same day, heavy shelling struck Sisak and Karlovac. In Sisak, three people were killed and six wounded; in Karlovac, three were wounded.

Retaliation had begun.

Even our capital city was not spared. We waited to see what would happen, knowing that our forces had already entered Jasenovac that day, and rumours circulated all morning that Okučani would be liberated the next day. The enemy surely could not tolerate that. Okučani was liberated the next day, around 1 p.m., and by the end of the day, all of Western Slavonia. The operation lasted only 36 hours. But here we record Zagreb's wartime chronicle:

**May 2 — 10:30 a.m.** A cluster bomb was dropped on Zagreb. In six explosions, five people were killed and 121 wounded. Shells fell on Draškovićevo, Stara Vlaška, Petrinjska, Zrinjevac, Šoštarićevo, Križanićevo... One hour after the explosions, phones in the city stopped working. Traffic was jammed, trams were halted.

**1:25 p.m.** Trams resumed operation.

**3:52–4:20 p.m.** Zagreb residents took shelter. A general alert was declared. Fortunately, there was no further shelling.

**May 2** Mr. Branko Mikša visited all explosion sites. He praised the citizens of Zagreb for enduring everything with dignity and without panic.

**Evening, May 2** President Dr. Franjo Tuđman and Mr. Branko Mikša visited all wounded citizens at the Trauma Clinic. 76 wounded were treated, and 36 were hospitalized.

**May 2** Immediately after the explosions, Zagreb residents rushed to the Blood Transfusion Institute to donate blood. 300 citizens donated — it was enough.

### DAY 2 — MAY 4

**May 3 — 12:00 p.m.** Six new Serbian missiles struck Zagreb. Ten minutes later, a general alert was declared and lasted until 5 p.m. Four shells hit the city centre, two struck the wider area. One person was killed, 53 were wounded. A bomb hit the Children's Hospital in Klaićevo Street, injuring the most vulnerable — sick children. Another bomb hit the Croatian National Theatre, wounding around 40 people, including 20 foreigners. The wounded lay on Mažuranić Square, Deželić Alley, Medulić Street, and British Square. Shells also fell on the Čehi neighbourhood. Movement through the city was restricted; deadly bomblets were scattered everywhere. Ministry of Interior teams began their removal.

**May 3** Dr. Mate Granić, accompanied by U.S. Ambassador Peter Galbraith and the ambassadors of France and Hungary, visited the Children's Hospital. Mr. Galbraith stated:

“When you attack the centre of a city with cluster bombs, your intent is to kill as many people as possible. That is the clearest message to the world — and to the perpetrators.”

**May 3** President of Croatia Dr. Franjo Tuđman addressed the Croatian people. He warned the Serbs: if the attack on Zagreb is repeated, the Croatian state will respond decisively.

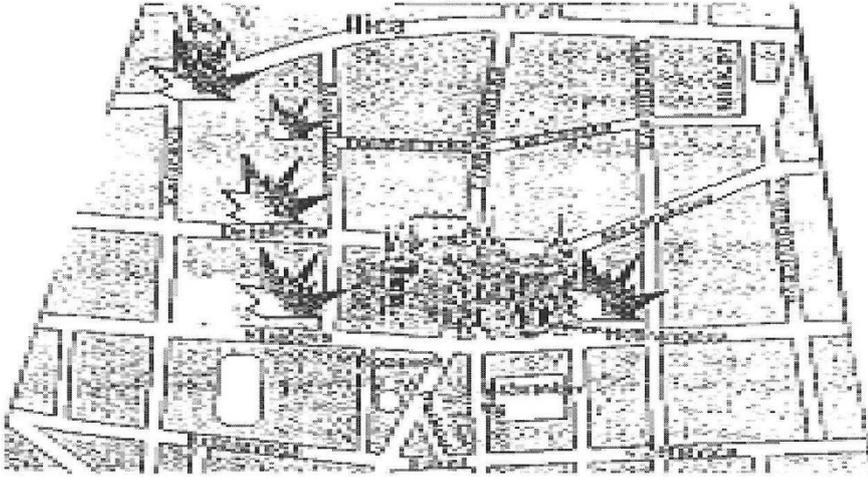
**May 4 — 12:38–1:40 p.m.** Another general alert in Zagreb. No shelling occurred.

In total, 23 missiles were fired at Zagreb. Six people were killed, 176 wounded — 39 seriously, 136 lightly. 83 buildings and 379 vehicles were damaged. From May 2 to 5, there were no classes in primary or secondary schools.

**As of May 5**, Croatian authorities were fully operational in Western Slavonia. In addition to the Zagreb–Lipovac highway, the railway line Zagreb–Vinkovci via Okučani was reopened.

*Katarina Butković*

## MISSILE ATTACK ON ZAGREB CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL AS TARGET



# Serbs bomb Zagreb lunch-time crowds

From anthony loyd in zagreb

ROCKETS carrying cluster bombs fell on lunch-time crowds in Zagreb yesterday, killing one person and injuring 64, including a Kent-born dancer.

Mark Boldin, 27, had returned only recently to the city but last night he lay in a hospital bed faced with the prospect that his dancing career might be over after bomb fragments tore into his stomach. The attack was the second of its kind in two days.

Last night six British soldiers serving with the UN peace-keeping force in Bosnia were wounded when a Serb tank slammed into the school they use as a barracks. A UN officer said none of the injuries was life-threatening. The peacekeepers, from the Household Cavalry and stationed in Maglaj, returned fire.

Mr Boldin, who dances with

the Croatian National Ballet, had been rehearsing in the national theatre complex in the centre of Zagreb when a Serb Orkan rocket shed its lethal cargo of bomblets in the street outside. Shrapnel blew through the windows and walls, hitting Mr Boldin in the legs, groin and abdomen, wounds that Tomislav Šoša, the head surgeon at the hospital, later described as "life threatening". Many of Mr Boldin's colleagues were also wounded.

From his hospital bed the Briton appeared optimistic as to about his chances of recovery.

Behind heavy anti-blast doors in the basement shelter of the children's hospital

**Continued on page 2, col 4**

**Innocents targeted, page 15**  
**Leading article and**  
**Letters, page 21**

## **MAY 3, 1995**

### **08:00 a.m.**

The usual morning rush fills the corridors. Wards have long since begun their work, morning coffee has been sipped, and the cosy warmth of one's own bed is forgotten. Breakfast is being served, and the hallways echo with: "Nurse, me! Nurse, me!" The changing room is alive with early commotion. Doctors hurry to visit the wards before the morning briefing. Awakened by the early May sun, the hospital steps into a new day. Though still fresh, yesterday's rocket attack on Zagreb is almost forgotten. Only a few exchange words about the dead and wounded. Four years of war have left their mark: death has become our daily companion. As one man from Sarajevo said: "The worst thing is habit. A person gets used to everything..." The power of habit.

### **09:00 a.m.**

Outpatient clinics are running at full speed. Illness doesn't care about yesterday's shelling. The corridors are full of little patients and their parents. Still, the crowd seems slightly thinner than usual for such a beautiful, sunny May day. It will take a few days for people to forget the fear and caution...

### **10:00 a.m.**

Morning coffee is being served. Rounds are over, and the first wave of work has passed. A short pause to catch one's breath before continuing. For the first time today, people speak freely about yesterday's horror. Everyone has a new story, a new detail. Someone knows one of the dead or wounded. Someone was near the site of the explosion. Someone saw it all only on television. No one understands how... or why? Damn them! The professor's son lives in the building on Strossmayer Square where one of the rockets hit; his car was destroyed, there are holes in the windows, but luckily, he's unharmed. He doesn't dare go into the courtyard — it's full of "bomblets." Someone joked: "Do you know the new anthem of Zagreb? 'Jingle Bells, Jingle Bells...'" It earns only a few bitter smiles.

### **11:00 a.m.**

It seems yesterday's catastrophe is already forgotten. The outpatient waiting rooms are packed; it appears that all the patients who didn't come yesterday due to the shelling have decided to make up for it today. Moreover, the sunny May day has driven children out into the streets, and the first little casualties with broken heads and fractured bones are already arriving. The weather promises more: sunshine and unusually high temperatures for this time of year. The surgical clinic staff grumble. This kind of weather can mean only one thing: lots of work. Truly, the day is beautiful. The temperature climbs past an incredible twenty-five degrees, and the sun shows no intention of hiding behind the clouds. Were it not for the work and this madness of war, one might wish to escape into nature. Nurses in Paediatrics have opened the doors to the playrooms on the terraces, and children's laughter now echoes throughout the hospital courtyard.

### **12:00 p.m.**

The cannon from Lotrščak echoes across the city. Someone jokes that rockets are falling on Zagreb again. The joke, somehow, doesn't land well. Children on the Paediatrics terraces become unruly, and the nurses bring them inside. Even they are affected by this sudden change in weather. Just a few days ago, it felt almost like winter — and now, it seems summer has begun.

### **12:05 p.m.**

It's lunchtime. Plates are being prepared; tables arranged. The little hungry ones are already waiting in their seats. The terraces are now empty. The children from Room 5 on the second floor are somewhere else in the hospital, undergoing tests. No matter — the kind nurses will save their lunch.

**12:10 p.m.**

Explosion. First, second, third. Then countless small ones. As if the sky had opened. The shattering of glass and crashing sounds mix with panicked screams. People throw themselves to the floor. Someone is wounded — blood stains the walls of the waiting room. A few seconds pass, but it feels like hours. A brush with eternity... The cries and screams of children pierce the air. Nurses and doctors run through the corridors, trying to determine if any child was injured. It seems all the children are safe. A true miracle, as not a single pane of glass remains intact. Room 5 on the second floor is almost completely destroyed. Incredible luck that no child was inside. Was it mere chance, or a miracle? Fortune or fate?

In the right operating room, Primarius Vlahović was completing the most critical part of surgery on a boy who had fractured his femur the day before. The bone was in place — it only needed to be secured. And then it began. The glass wall facing the courtyard offered little protection against the “bomblets.” A flash from the courtyard, followed by a series of explosions and the sound of shattering glass. The windows of the operating room burst. Katica grabs her head and screams — from pain, from fear. Blood runs down her forehead. Some dive to the floor, others cluster around the small patient. Deep under anaesthesia, he has no idea what's happening around him. A decision is made: the operation must be completed. Someone checks Katica — the wound isn't serious, likely just a minor injury. Then, through a large hole in the window, a head appears: one of the workers renovating the hospital had been on the scaffolding next to the operating rooms at the moment of the explosion. “Bloody hell,” he says, “it nearly hit me!”

**12:20 p.m.**

The surgical clinic is in chaos. People rush in, bringing the wounded. A mother waiting for an exam with her child is seriously injured. The child, luckily, only lightly. Mirna Kostović is brought in — daughter of Deputy Prime Minister and physician Dr. Ivica Kostović. She doesn't look well. In shock, with wounds on her shoulders, chest, and abdomen that appear serious. She is immediately transferred to the operating room. She will undergo surgery for several hours, and again the next day. The rest of the wounded are all adults, fortunately.

The general alert siren sounds. A bit late — by then, most of the children are already in the nuclear shelter beneath the new wing. Nurses rush up and down. Four hundred sick children must be moved to safety. There's no time for panic or fear — that will come later. After about fifteen minutes, all the children are in the shelter. Or rather, almost all... The most critical patients — those in the Intensive Care Unit and Oncology — are placed in the hallway on the first floor. They are connected to machines and must remain near their equipment; moving them to the shelter could be fatal. Their doctors and nurses stay with them. The fear in these children's eyes hurts even more. They are already fighting for their lives against cruel diseases. One more battle — this one with fear and “bomblets” — might be too much for them.

**12:30 p.m.**

Members of the Zagreb Police Department arrive — the so-called bomb disposal “special forces.” They bring news that the Croatian National Theatre has been hit. There are many wounded, they say; the ballet dancers were in rehearsal at the time. No word yet on fatalities. One of them, Ivan Markulin, a 28-year-old man, explains that he was scheduled to be there, but couldn't resist the urge to come help

the children and their hospital. He himself was once a patient here, he says, and his two sons are regulars... Without many words, they begin clearing the “bomblets” scattered all around.

Slowly, the reality of what happened becomes clear. The news spreads through the shelter. Orkan. A killer rocket. Someone has a radio. We listen to Zagreb’s Radio Sljeme. It’s still unclear how many rockets hit the city. They report that one struck our hospital, and another hit the Croatian National Theatre. The children are restless; they react in their own “childlike” way. Some enjoy the novelty of the situation — to them, it’s like a detective story. They’re too young to understand... The younger ones cry. Or just sit, staring at a single point, without words or sobs. Fear paralyzes.

Among the adults — horror. We look at each other in silence. Has someone from our own been hurt? In the corner, someone curses quietly. Aunt Zdenka sits on a little bed, her gaze lost somewhere in the distance. She sighs and whispers: “Damn them! Damn them, damn them all...”

At the entrance to the shelter, commotion. The Mayor of Zagreb, Mr. Mikša, arrives, accompanied by our Director, Primarius Fattorini. The city cares for its youngest. The first journalists follow them, recording statements, but no one has the right words to describe this horror. Behind the mayor walks Dr. Bosanac — a veteran of Vukovar, once again reliving the same scenes: shelters, fear, crying... God, will it ever end? Dr. Kostović enters — Deputy Prime Minister. His daughter is seriously wounded, currently on the operating table, two floors above us. His eyes are filled with tears and worry. For a moment, personal grief overtakes statesmanship. Before us stands not a government official, but a father whose daughter is fighting for her life.

In the hospital administration office, work continues “at full speed.” No one is in the shelter. Phones ring — concerned friends call. People of goodwill offer help. Worried parents call, asking about their children now in the shelter. Ksenija reassures them that everything is fine, that all the children are safe, that none have been injured...

More commotion in the shelter. Dr. Mate Granić enters — another physician-statesman, Minister of Foreign Affairs — accompanied by Professor Željko Reiner, Deputy Minister of Health. With them is Dr. Slobodan Lang, veteran of Nova Bila and Bosnia Srebrena... Even in their eyes — disbelief. “Croatia will find a way to protect its youngest,” says Dr. Granić. Journalists scribble in their notebooks, cameras roll, tape recorders spin. They capture fragments of time... But fear cannot be recorded.

### **1:00 p.m.**

Another explosion in the courtyard. Has it started again? Someone screams: “Surgeon to the courtyard, urgently!” Dr. Joško Filipušić, paediatric surgeon, runs through the courtyard, leaping over bomblets. Right next to the gas station — the body of a man, face down. He turns him over — a scene of horror. The face blackened by the blast, a gaping hole where one eye should be. Hundreds of tiny wounds across the chest, hands reduced to bloody pulp, the right thigh blown apart. The young man — a bomb disposal specialist — exhales once more, waves his arms as if trying to grasp something. Perhaps life, slipping away... They carry him to the surgical clinic, attempt resuscitation. All in vain. A young life ends in the courtyard of the Children’s Hospital. People have died in our hospital before, but never like this... We learn it was Ivan Markulin — that kind young man who was once a patient here as a child. He was dismantling a bomblet when it exploded in his hands. Who will tell his wife? Who will tell his sons? And he wasn’t even supposed to be here...

Just a few meters away, unaware of the lost battle for a young life, foreign diplomats — frozen in horror — give statements to reporters. Ambassadors — American, Russian, Swedish, Turkish, Albanian, French, British — repeat words of condemnation and shock. To shell a Central European capital at

noon, to shell its children's hospital — there are no words strong enough to condemn it. Mr. Kerestedzhiyants, the Russian ambassador, a grandfather, was here yesterday with his grandson... Msgr. Giulio Einaudi, Papal Nuncio to Croatia, arrives. "The Pope is praying for you," he says. Together they tour the Clinic and enter the shelter. They are shaken by the scenes of horror: shattered waiting rooms, blood on the floor. They step over piles of broken glass and splintered furniture. They leave the shelter without a word. Seasoned politicians — after this — have nothing left to say. Many words will be spoken later, official statements made, positions of their governments expressed, but these are the real words... The original ones. Veterans of global diplomacy, chosen for their ability to handle any situation, here are simply fathers and grandfathers, thinking of their own children. Children are not to blame for anything. Especially not sick children...

**3:30 p.m.**

The siren sounds. A long wail signals the end of the general alert. The shelter slowly empties, and the children return to their little beds. Those who have them — many beds are covered in piles of shattered glass. We place two children in each bed on the side of the hospital that wasn't hit. The smallest ones — even four to a bed. It's a tight squeeze, but this is no time for comfort. Everyone helps to clear the mess. The hospital must get back on its feet as soon as possible. Sick children cannot wait...

**7:00 p.m.**

Two high-ranking UNCRO officers arrive. Judging by the stars gleaming on their shoulders, they must be generals. They tour the hospital. They too are horrified. Few words are spoken. The military vocabulary has no term for the shelling of a children's hospital. Those who did this are not soldiers — they are terrorists, barbarians... Tomorrow, some spokesperson will deliver sugary words of condemnation. Politics...

**11:50 p.m.**

The last outpatient children leave the hospital. They've been examined, prescribed some syrup. They head home — to safety and warmth. In the surgical clinic, Joško and the on-call team stare blankly out the window into the courtyard. Just hours ago, behind their backs, a battle was fought and lost. A battle that had nothing to do with war. A battle for life.

In the wards — peace and silence. Only the occasional whimper of a child in sleep. A child calls for their mother. "Nurse, I'd like some water." Heels echo down the hallway — a young nurse runs to bring water to the little patient. The television is on. The late news is ending. "Miri is doing well," says the voice from the screen. It doesn't matter. Tomorrow is a new day...

*Zoran Bahtijarević, MD*

## **MR. SC. JOŠKO FILIPUŠIĆ, MD**

### **JUNIOR ON-CALL SURGEON, MAY 3rd, 1995**

On May 3rd, 1995, I was serving as the junior on-call surgeon at the Children's Surgery Clinic. It was a typical busy spring morning. The previous few sunny days had "gifted" us with a wave of fractures and the usual cuts and scrapes, joined that morning by young patients coming in for routine check-ups. The beautiful May weather suggested we might have a busier day, though it was still early for the usual little "accidents" from school and playground games. Although the memory of yesterday's rocket attack on Zagreb was still fresh, nothing pointed to the catastrophe that was about to unfold. Absorbed in the greyness of everyday life, we were calmly handling cases, with occasional sparks of humour. Everything indicated it would be just another ordinary May day.

And then it began...

I had just resolved a minor issue in the ward and was heading toward the surgical clinic. On the way, I exchanged a few routine jokes with colleagues and tossed a couple of compliments to the busy nurses — just in passing. Entering the hallway in front of the clinic, I saw a crowd of people patiently waiting their turn to be examined and thought, "God, this is going to be one of those days..." I hadn't even finished the thought when the air was pierced by explosions. First, second, third... followed by the sound of shattering glass. Everything fell silent — the kind of silence a novelist might call "deathly." And then came the horror; the silence was broken by screams of fear and pain.

Not knowing what was happening, I instinctively ran toward the surgical clinic, to be in the right place in case of injuries. Like a bad omen, my darkest suspicions came true: moments later, Associate Professor Bošnjak rushed into the clinic with a nurse, carrying an injured woman. I jumped in to help, took the woman and helped transfer her to a stretcher. She was visibly shocked, sobbing in pain, and kept repeating: "Where is my child? Where is my child?" I examined her carefully and noticed a palm-sized wound on her back, near the left shoulder blade. Just as we began treating the wound, her husband ran in, carrying their bloodied child. Fortunately, it was a minor injury — a bomblet had lodged in the palm of the right hand.

I hadn't even had time to properly assess the injury when the technical staff burst in, carrying the wounded Mr. Bakula. He had been in the courtyard when the "bomblets" began to fall. Though seriously injured in the chest, he was not in immediate danger, and after administering first aid, we sent him by ambulance to the Surgical Clinic at Sisters of Mercy Hospital, while we prepared to assist any injured children. Thankfully, there were none that day.

After a brief pause, several unfamiliar older individuals entered the clinic, carrying a severely wounded girl in their arms. I learned it was Mirna Kostović, daughter of the Deputy Prime Minister — a fellow physician, Dr. Ivica Kostović. The girl was conscious, sobbing in pain. Multiple wounds on her shoulders, chest, and abdomen indicated serious, life-threatening injuries. We immediately began resuscitation. We managed to stabilize her and sent her straight to the operating room, where surgery began and would last several hours. In the adjacent room, colleagues were treating other wounded patients, but I didn't have time to ask for details... There was too much work. Too much blood.

Then — another explosion in the hospital courtyard, followed by a scream that chilled the blood. We looked at each other in fear — could it be happening again? Someone shouted: "A man is wounded! Surgeon to the courtyard, urgently!" I ran — nearly flew — down the stairs. Before me, horror: the body of a uniformed man lay face down in blood, just meters from the gas station. I couldn't see his hands — they were tucked under his body. His legs were crossed, like in a Turkish sit. I approached him

and, without hesitation, grabbed his shoulders and turned him over. The sight was even more terrifying: both hands were gone, with exposed bone and charred flesh protruding from the forearms. One thigh was practically obliterated. His face was burned by the blast; one eye was missing, replaced by a gaping hole. His chest and abdomen were riddled with hundreds of tiny wounds from shrapnel. Just as I turned him, the young man gasped and moved his arms, as if trying to grasp something — perhaps life itself, slipping away... We carried him to the clinic and attempted resuscitation, but it was too late.

Later, I learned his name: Ivan Markulin, 28 years old, father of two small children, a member of the special forces of the Ministry of the Interior. He gave his life trying to protect the Children's Hospital and its young patients from a deadly explosive device.

That day, at the Children's Hospital Zagreb — the beloved "Children's Hospital" — six people were wounded, and one lost his life. Two hospital staff and four innocent visitors will carry visible scars for the rest of their lives, as a permanent reminder of that day. One member of the Ministry of the Interior, father of two little boys, himself once a patient of the hospital he died defending, will sadly not remember this day. His memories ended in the courtyard of the Children's Hospital — but he has entered ours...



## Orkan on the Children's Hospital

**One police officer was killed in the hospital, and several others were injured. The bomb fell into the courtyard on the eastern side of the hospital, and the worst damage was sustained by the outpatient clinics in the eastern wing, the laboratories, the waiting rooms — which were full of patients — as well as the paediatric and gynaecological dispensaries.**

**On Đure Deželića Street, a grave silence prevailed.** A group of people stood on the road, their faces blank, simply watching. No one could say exactly what had happened. A young man from a nearby window pointed silently toward the street, where police had already marked several fragments with white chalk — debris that had fallen onto the pavement. In that moment, which seemed to stretch into eternity, the rear doors of the Children's Hospital in Klaićeva opened.

**Inside the corridors, panic and urgency took hold.** Already at the entrance, a hospital staff member informed us: several people were injured, and one person was dead.

**In front of the office of Primarius Dr. Ivan Fattorini, the hospital director, the crowd thickened.** From somewhere in the back, a voice called out: "The children! What about the children?" The director immediately gave a statement:

"The projectile struck at 12:10. It was likely another bomb — the courtyard is covered in bomblets. It hit the eastern side of the hospital, causing a massive explosion. The worst damage was sustained by the outpatient clinics in the east

wing, the laboratories, and the waiting rooms, which were full of patients. The paediatric and gynaecological dispensaries, located one floor below, were also affected," said the Primarius, gesturing toward a hospital model to indicate the impacted areas.

We walk through the hallway by the laboratories. The floor is covered in a thick layer of shattered glass. Every few steps, someone from the large group — hospital staff and journalists — stumbles over the debris. The windows are gone. Down in the courtyard, several bomblets are clearly visible.

The news of one fatality is confirmed. A bomb disposal technician was killed while likely attempting to deactivate the bomblets — remnants of the explosive device.

Inside the hospital, we encounter Mr. Branko Mikša, Mayor of Zagreb. As journalists push their way onto the terrace, from which the crater — likely caused by the projectile or a large fragment — is clearly visible, the mayor says:

"It's absolutely difficult for me to comment on this situation in any way. You're witnessing the bloody aftermath yourselves. We still don't know the exact

number of injured, but in any case, it's high time the world sees who we're dealing with," says Branko Mikša, visibly shaken by the situation.

The crowd grows. Nurses pass by carrying blood for transfusions. Those who were in the hospital at the moment of impact mostly remain silent. Many are too shocked to speak. We descend into the shelter. Children lie in beds, most of them crying. The nurses caring for them cry too.

"I was holding a child when it suddenly exploded. Thank God no one was injured — at least not in my ward, C-Surgery," says a tearful Irena Kovačić, standing over the bed of a little girl who was trembling silently.

We head toward the exit, winding through corridors and stairwells. Somehow, everyone manages to find their way through the hospital. We're back at the rear entrance. Some try to step into the courtyard to photograph the bomblets, but the more clear-headed stop them:

"Get back inside — you'll be killed!" voices shout.

Everyone retreats indoors. And the day continues. This was not the only projectile.

TANJA TOLIĆ

**KSENIJA VRANJICAN, SECRETARY TO THE DIRECTOR**

**May 3rd, 1995, Late Evening**

Dear Monika,

I'm sure even the envelope of this letter will surprise you — you know how much I dislike writing. I much prefer long phone conversations. But today, unfortunately, deserves to be written down. To be remembered. To never, ever be forgotten.

I believe you've heard the headline of the day — Zagreb was shelled with cluster ORKAN bombs. How do I feel? I don't know. I'm not sure if I'm scared, confused, or if I feel anything at all. The children are fine, asleep. Zoran is on duty, and I'm releasing tension by writing you this letter.

I'm remembering one of our phone calls (I remember the date well — September 16th, 1991), when a low-flying jet from the former JNA cut me off mid-sentence, right outside my window. God, I thought every window in the house would shatter from the vibrations — fear, rage. You remember, I told you we wouldn't be in touch for a while, because it seemed “it had reached us too” — shelters, blackouts... You know that well, having gone through your own Calvary, like so many in Dubrovnik.

But four years have passed since then. The initial tension faded, and I believed we'd soon live normally again — you know: work, kids, friends... Life goes on. You try to grasp more — you get less — and you find yourself somewhere in the middle. In the end, I convinced myself the Chetniks were “far away.” Until today proved me wrong.

It was just past noon when it hit. What a strange sound — a deep, muffled boom, a pause — then a burst of rapid fire.

We heard something similar yesterday, May 2nd — a blast in the city centre, though not so close to the hospital. After that, two girls were brought in (Petra and Dora!). That's when they showed me the shelter, which from my part of the hospital can only be reached through the courtyard — and the keys to that passage are in our office.

So, when the shelling stopped, I ran down to unlock it. And there — horror. Shattered glass everywhere, dust and smoke still hanging in the gynaecology clinic, water leaking from a cracked pipe, and holes from bomblet shrapnel in the large windows. The courtyard was full of glass and those little monsters.

Strangely, something trivial crossed my mind — I carefully stepped back onto the stairs, not out of fear of bomblets or cuts, but because I didn't want to ruin my new tights. Ridiculous.

Quick, skilled, well-trained nurses took the children and went down, but since the courtyard was impassable, I returned to the Director's Office for further instructions.

You ask if I was afraid? At that moment — no. Believe me, I was angry. The fear must have turned into rage from the overwhelming sense of helplessness. I didn't even ask — why did they do this? You can't expect a logical answer from psychopaths who show their power by targeting a hospital full of sick children.

In the Director's Office — like an anthill. Phones ringing, fax screeching, doctors coming and going. Yet somehow, there was order in the chaos. Everything moved without panic. Primarius Fattorini issued “wartime assignments,” immediately went to inspect the hospital, and I stayed by the phone, calling the Crisis Headquarters, the Ministry of Health, and others.

I said — we've been hit. But luckily, none of the children were harmed, except for a few adults who happened to be at the Clinic. One of our nurses was injured by glass, and Mr. Bakula (a mechanical technician who was in the courtyard at the time) was hit by bomblet fragments — he'll survive.

Mayor Mikša arrived immediately, followed by Dr. Bosanac, and Mr. Kostović, Deputy Prime Minister, whose daughter was seriously wounded near the Croatian National Theatre — but I trust our surgeons will save her...

Journalists reacted quickly — radio, TV, print. The news was still hot, sensational, shocking — and, of course, good for circulation (cynical, but true, right?).

Soon I became aware of how close we all were to death. One dear, brave man was killed — bomb disposal officer Ivan Markulin. It's a cruel paradox: he had done this dangerous job since the war began, dismantled over 700 bomblets, and then died in so-called peace.

He was far from his children (I later learned he had two little sons). Maybe our kids reminded him of them, maybe he rushed... and then — blood, death.

As time passed, prominent diplomats arrived — Mr. Galbraith, Mr. Hewlitt, Mr. Kerestedzhiyants, ambassadors from France, Romania, Sweden, Turkey, Pakistan, Albania, Slovenia, Bosnia, and Msgr. Einaudi. Horrified by such brutality, they toured the Clinic and the shelter...

But concerned nods don't help much — gentlemen, do something concrete. Today you sympathize with us, and tomorrow? Will you again share responsibility for the attack, and with more or less understanding, suggest we yield to Serbian terrorists, not provoke them, not ask back what is ours?

The office reminded me of a layered cake — a layer of journalists, a layer of ministers, then TV crews, then UNPROFOR. Many good people from Zagreb, Croatia, and beyond immediately offered help — both kind words and concrete support. Both are useful.

By late afternoon, the tension eased. The children were returned to their beds, and the "guests" dispersed. Our staff made a rough damage assessment — the building and equipment were significantly affected, but the full extent couldn't be determined so quickly.

Still, one thing matters most — not a single child was harmed.

I must finally rest — I'm cold, I have a fever — probably a delayed reaction to fear. Normal, I suppose. I don't know what tomorrow will bring, but whatever it is, I believe we'll repay today — with interest.

Sending you love, and I promise we'll see each other soon,

Ksenija

**ŽELJKO CVETKO, MD**

**ASSISTANT TO THE DIRECTOR, CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL ZAGREB**

**May 3rd, 1995, Noon**

I'm talking to a colleague who works at the Square, asking how things were yesterday — it was loud there. Not easy. Her parents are in Novska, where shells are falling. Nada interrupts to say the Director needs me — second line. I end the call and get the Director. "Hi, how are you?" "Good. What needs doing?"

And then — it seems like a millisecond away — DUM. Then a blast. Whistling. Shattering glass. "They're bombing!" shouts Fattorini. I drop to the floor. Nada and Dubravka rush out of the clinic. The hallway is filled with smoke. Glass everywhere. They instinctively head through the courtyard. Then someone smart warns about the bomblets. Now only voices are heard, footsteps running, glass crunching underfoot, a few curses, sighs. Ligutić, cigarette in hand, directs people toward the basement, then into the shelter.

I walk slowly across the courtyard toward the shelter — it seems calm. I reach the basement stairs. The children are already inside. It feels like only 5–6 minutes have passed.

I head to the surgical clinic. Everyone's rushing, but with purpose. Željka from paediatrics arrives, carrying IVs and bottles. Bakula lies down in the hallway, says his back stings — he's pale. Milić calls for an X-ray (I later learn he was sent to Vinogradska).

In recovery, a young woman with a bandaged foot. I turn around — already a new patient: a pale young girl, conscious, already on IV. Later I realize she's Dr. Kostović's daughter.

I go down to the shelter — it's stuffy. The little ones cry, the older ones are quiet. We wait for information — what, where, how, who. You can see on colleagues' faces that the first calls home bring calm. Sanja (Dr. Kolaček) is worried about her patients on parenteral nutrition, and little Zekić, who's dying. "You know, Grga's whole wall collapsed," she says.

I decide to head to the Director's Office. Peace. Warm air and sunlight stream freely through shattered windows. Crunch. Creak. Watch out — bomblets. I reach the foyer. The floor is covered in thick layers of broken glass. I check the time — it's only 12:13 p.m. (13 minutes since the explosion).

The office is buzzing as usual. Mikša arrives — already? He asks questions, looks around. Dr. Bosanac is here too — she came for the Wednesday Commission. HTV and radio are already present.

The Director and Mikša coordinate and head toward the hospital and shelter. Kostović approaches — calm. Does he know about his daughter?

Then, like in a TV series, Granić arrives, followed by Galbraith and Prof. Reiner. Radio Cibona calls — of course, they want Fattorini. "He's busy. Can I help?" What a question — I ask if I can help them. Ha! Of course, I can. They want a live update on the situation.

I think for a moment — and just then, at 12:30 p.m., I receive the first list of the injured. We need to inform all the worried parents. Thankfully, all hospitalized children are safe. Among outpatients, only two parents and one child were slightly injured. I say this on air — it seems important, because afterward, there were no individual calls from anxious parents.

The Director, Granić, and Galbraith head to the shelter. I stay in the office. Colleague Jukić from the City Secretariat asks how things are. I see Šolta, accompanied by a civilian (a bomb technician), hunting

for bomblets. That's when I learn of the tragedy — the death of a police officer from a bomblet explosion. I stop, think, realize — death has entered our beautiful courtyard.

I check the time — it's still not 1:00 p.m. The Director calls from the shelter, asking for help — practically the entire diplomatic corps has arrived. We split them into two groups. On the way out, we meet Mr. Sanader with more ambassadors. We pass the shelter, ICU, oncology, and head to the operating room — shattered glass everywhere. They're laying down plastic sheets to keep working.

I guide the guests to the Director's Office — and there, truly, all the distinguished visitors. Fattorini takes over.

I go to the ward, to the shelter. Now the questions begin — when will the alert end? It seems news of Okučani's liberation is coming in. That's good.

Kadić is already inspecting damage — calculating, perhaps? It's 2:00 p.m. — peak time for ambassador visits to the Clinic, followed by journalists and TV crews. The Director is in contact with the wounded from the ballet — it's hard for him...

The Mayor responds exactly how I imagine the city's leader should — orders contact with "Staklo" (the glass company), sets the start of repairs for tomorrow (and it's only two hours since the attack). "No plastic sheets — this is Zagreb, a hospital, children!"

The administrative mechanism works flawlessly. I'm impressed by the calm and professionalism of the newly arrived bomb technicians, who — despite the loss of a colleague — search, clear, and destroy bomblets.

I see Kadić again — he's already counted the holes in the roof, officially recorded by city representatives. Walking through the destroyed areas, it's a miracle there weren't more injuries.

Katarina, Prof. Grgurić, and I head to the ward, planning what to do after the alert — where to place the children. Many parents are arriving to pick them up.

Many shattered windows, but only large holes — no full breakage. It'll be okay. The children will be safe.

Journalists keep arriving at the Director's Office — Czech, Hungarian, British — reacting differently. Some are shaken, others seem unfazed by the destruction.

We agree on a short meeting of department heads — assessment, analysis, assignments. The alert has ended (when, I don't know), but people are rushing home to their families.

I stay — I'm on duty. How will the night unfold?

I return to the ward and see the nurses (young mothers, young women) — calm, composed, cheerful, with patient lists by room. Everyone accounted for. With them, there will be no problems moving forward.



## VOICES OF THE CHILDREN

### **Slavko Lucić**

I wish my aunt would be near me. I wish my mum and dad would come soon. They are still in Bosnia. They said I'll be well soon, and there will be no more shooting — but they're doing it again. I wish my mum could come.

That Wednesday, the nurses let us out on the terrace to get some fresh air. It was 11:50 when I came back in, because I didn't want to be outside anymore. I was with Nurse Sabina when the first "bell" fell. As we were all running into the hallway, there was another one.

At 12:10, when the first "bell" fell on our terrace, I lay down near Room Number Five and watched my friends running out of their rooms, chased out by the bomb. Thank God nobody was hurt. A piece of the "bell" missed my head. God watched over all of us. I'm grateful to God for saving us. Rooms Number 10 and 11 were damaged. All the windows were broken.

### **Edina Arnaut**

I got very scared when the shell exploded. The nurses took us to the hallway immediately, trying to soothe us. At first, my heart was beating so fast, but then I felt better. In one room, the windows were broken. I hope the war will end and everything will be peaceful again.

### **Hrvoje Španović**

Just imagine you're lying in your bed watching television. All of a sudden, something explodes, and all the windows break. You hear the sound of the siren. Danger! It's happening again. We went to the hallway to protect ourselves.

This is what I'm going through right now, and I hope things will change. I wish nobody would ever go through this again.

### **Matilda Sačić**

It was about 12 o'clock when we heard the first explosion, then another one, and another. A few minutes later, there was a warning of danger, and we went to the hallway. We were very scared. I kept asking myself — how can anybody attack children and innocent people so heartlessly?

There were many wounded that day. Some were killed too. Since then, I startle every time I hear a loud noise. But I believe this will stop, and we will live peacefully in freedom again.

I wish this cruel weapon — which destroys human lives and their homes — would disappear, and that nobody will ever remind me of it for the rest of my life.

## 262 MM (12-ROUND) LRSV M-87 'ORKAN' MULTIPLE ROCKET LAUNCHER SYSTEM

### Development/Description

Late in 1988 at a military exhibition in Iraq, the Iraqi army displayed a 262mm 12-round multiple rocket launcher system known as the Ababeel 50. Examination of available evidence indicated that the system was Yugoslavian in origin and mounted on the rear of the Yugoslav FAR 3235 heavy-duty (8 x 8) cross-country truck. Since then further information, gained at the Iraqi's First Baghdad International Exhibition for Military Production in 1989, has shown that it is in fact a joint Iraqi-Yugoslav project with Iraq contributing to the development and producing some of the parts locally.

A typical battery of M-87 launchers consists of:

four 8x8 launchers, four 8x8 resupply vehicles (each with 24 reload rockets), one 8x8 command post vehicle, two 4x4 topographic survey light vehicles, two 4x4 observation post light vehicles, one 4x4 meteorological survey vehicle.

The command post vehicle is fitted with 3 German Teldix land navigation system. Both the resupply and command post, vehicles are on the same 6x8 chassis as the launcher vehicle and have a similar tarpaulin system to make identification of the launcher difficult.

Loading of the launcher is performed by a semiautomatic system with the preparations to fire only taking two minutes. Firing of the rockets can be either singly or in a ripple mode by means of an electronic trigger in the vehicle cab. If needed firing can also be done up to 20 to 50 m off-vehicle by means of a remote control box with attached cable. All the traverse and elevation functions are automatically performed via control units with manual systems available as a back-up.

In Serbian Army service the launcher is fitted with a 12,7 mm heavy AA machine gun on the cab roof and four 82 mm smoke dischargers in the front bumper.

The five-man crew has two 7.62 mm fully automatic rifles, two 7.62 mm semi-automatic rifles and a 90 mm ROR-90- hand-held anti-tank rocket launcher for self-defence.

The rocket, known as the M-87, is 4.656 m long and uses a two-stage solid propellant rocket motor. The booster stage uses 10 kg of fuel and burns for 200 ms to generate 8000 kg of thrust to lift the rocket clear of the launcher tube. Once this happens the main sustainer motor cuts in with its 130 kg fuel load to give 18000kg of thrust during its five second burn time. This gives the rocket a maximum velocity of 1200 m/s. Flight time to the maximum range of 50000 m is 110 seconds with the highest possible altitude reached, depending upon launch angle, being 22 000 m. By opening and closing the four available aerodynamic brake assemblies one of four different ballistic range trajectories can be chosen: 24 000, 28 000, 37 000 and 50000m.

A TV camera made by Bosch of Germany is mounted on top of the left side of the launcher, to be used in a sense similar to the German 110mm LARS in that a single rocket is launched and at some point in its flight is detonated so as not to alert the target area. The camera monitors this and the data collected is used to calculate the correct firing solution so that the remainder of the battery or vehicle salvo can be fired. Several types of warhead can be fitted.

1. 91 kg unitary APHE. An inertia fuse with instantaneous or delay action is fitted

2. 91 kg cluster munition with a payload of 288 HEAT-fragmentation bomblets. The shaped charge-equipped bomblet also has some 420 steel spheres to enhance the fragmentation effect. Lethal radius is approximately 10 m and armour plate penetration 60 mm plus, A typical dispersion pattern for a warhead at payload release height would be an ellipse 180 m x 165 m

3. 83 kg cluster munition with a payload of 24 small cylindrical hollow-charge AT mines, each fitted with four flip-out curved vanes to stabilize their flight to the ground and ensure correct orientation there. The mine can penetrate up to 40 mm plus of armour plate.

Both cluster munition warheads are fitted with an electronic time fuse for bomblet/mine delivery.

The vehicle is fitted with a central tyre pressure regulation system and to provide a more stable firing platform four stabilizers are lowered to the ground, one either side to the rear of the second road wheel and two at the very rear. When traveling the launcher is traversed to the front and the whole launcher is covered by a tarpaulin cover with integral bows.

## Specifications

Calibre: 262 mm

Number of barrels: 12

Length of rocket: 4.656 m

Weight of rocket:

(APHE/bomblet) 389 kg

(AT mine) 381 kg

Weight of warhead;

{APHE/bomblet) 91 Kg

(AT mine) 83 kg

Max range: 50 000 m

Dispersion at max range: 220 m range. 1/5 m azimuth

Max velocity: 1200 m/s

Rate of fire: 1 rocket/2.3-4 s

Emplacement time: 2 mm

Displacement time: 1 min

Crew: 5

Combat weight: 32 000 kg

Length: 9 m

Width: 2.64 m

Height: 3.84 m

Max road speed: 80 km/h

Max range: 600 km

Gradient: 60%

Side slope: 25%

Trench: 1.8 m

Engine: 354 hp OM422 turbocharged diesel

Power supply: 24 V DC

Status

Production probably halted. In service with Iraq (2-3 systems delivered before Gulf War. as the Ababel 50) and the former Yugoslavia.

Contractor

Enquiries to Federal Directorate of Supply and Procurement (SDPR).



ORKAN M-87



*"Extremely lethal weapon against unprotected live targets"*

*J. W. Burlow Jane's Defence 3/93*

## **ROCKET SYSTEM M-87 "Orkan"**

The weapon used in the attack on Zagreb was identified as the M-87 "Orkan" rocket system. It is a twelve-barrel, large-calibre (262 mm) rocket launcher with a maximum range of 50 km. It was manufactured in the military facilities of the former Yugoslavia in cooperation with Iraq and shares characteristics with systems used by American and Russian launchers.

### **Technical and Tactical Characteristics of the System**

The multi-barrel rocket launcher fires five-meter-long rockets in three-second intervals. The rocket's flight speed is 1,200 meters per second, and at its maximum range of 50 km, it ascends to an altitude of 22 km before descending onto the target. The system allows for three types of warheads. One option is a high-explosive charge containing 91 kg of explosives, intended for the destruction of fortified enemy structures. Another option involves 24 anti-tank mines that are dispersed over a wide corridor to prevent the advance of armoured formations. The third type of warhead, used in the attack on Zagreb, contains 288 mini-bombs, known as "bells," housed in seven plastic tubes within the rocket's body. The rocket is programmed to activate at an altitude of 100 to 500 meters, dispersing the bombs over an elliptical area of 200 x 200 meters, where they detonate and incapacitate personnel.

### **Effect of the "Bells"**

The "bells" are designed with dual functionality. Inside each is a shaped copper cone surrounded by 35 grams of explosive. Upon detonation, a stream of molten copper is formed, capable of penetrating 60 mm of steel armour—sufficient to breach light military transport vehicles—causing casualties among crew members through both the dispersion of lead pellets and fragments of molten copper, which reach extremely high temperatures.

However, the primary effect of this type of warhead is anti-personnel. It achieves this by scattering 420 lead pellets embedded in a plastic casing around the copper cylinder, which disperse over a wide radius upon explosion. This results in a large number of injuries, often involving multiple wounds that cause severe polytrauma, long-term disability, and permanent impairment. Due to these effects, this type of cluster munition is banned under international conventions, even for use against military targets.

**Children's Hospital Zagreb**  
Faculty of Medicine, University of Zagreb  
Klaićeva 16, 10000 Zagreb,  
Republic of Croatia  
Tel: (01) 440 155, 441 616  
Fax: (00) 451 508

#### **DIRECTOR'S OFFICE**

Zagreb, May 4, 1995

We enclose a list of patients hospitalized and treated on an outpatient basis on May 2 and May 3, 1995.

#### **Hospitalized on May 2, 1995**

- Dora Adžić, 2.5 years old (injured on Petrinjska Street, moderately severe injury)
- Petra Ban, 6 years old (discharged on May 3)

#### **Hospitalized on May 3, 1995**

- Mirna Kostović, student, transported from the area near the Croatian National Theatre (explosive chest injury – severe bodily injury)

#### **Outpatient treatment on May 3, 1995**

- Katica Horvat, born 1966, surgical nurse (glass injury in operating room – minor bodily injury)
- Zvonko Bakula, mechanical technician (explosive wound to chest and pelvis – severe bodily injury, currently at the Surgical Clinic, Sisters of Mercy University Hospital)
- Ana Marija Risović, 3 months old (finger phalanx injury – in the waiting room of the neurology outpatient clinic – minor bodily injury)
- Sanja Risović, mother of Ana Marija (in the waiting room of the neurology outpatient clinic, explosive chest injury – currently at the Surgical Clinic, Sisters of Mercy University Hospital – severe bodily injury)
- Tatjana Radaković, born 1970 (in the waiting room of the gynaecology outpatient clinic – lacerated foot injury – after treatment transported to an unknown facility – severe bodily injury)

#### **Fatality**

- Ivan Markulin, born 1967, explosives technician, Zagreb Police Department (explosive injuries with amputations, deceased during initial treatment)

Upisni broj [ ]

**RANJENIČKI KARTON**  
 KLINIKA ZA DječJE BOLESTI ZAGREB  
 KLINIKA ZA DječJU KIRURGIJU  
 Klatčeva 16, Zagreb 3  
 Zdravstvena ustanova - mjesto  
 RISOUIC STANJA  
 Prezime, (Ime oca) Ime

JMBG ili datum rođenja [ ]  
 ALBAHARIJEVA 7  
 Adresa stanovanja

Ime i adresa rodbine [ ]

Čin - zanimanje [ ] Jedinica - mjesto [ 208 ]

Pripadnost: ZNG TO MUP  CIVIL Ostali podaci za identifikaciju [ ]

Označi ozljedu	Vrsta ozljede	Vrijeme i mjesto ranjavanja
	Op So <input checked="" type="radio"/> Eo K BoT	95.05.02.17 Godina Mjesec Dan Mjesto Dijagnoza: Vulnus scl omnis de

Upisni broj [ ]

**RANJENIČKI KARTON**  
 KLINIKA ZA DječJE BOLESTI ZAGREB  
 KLINIKA ZA DječJU KIRURGIJU  
 Zdravstvena ustanova - mjesto  
 MARKULIN IVAN  
 Prezime, (Ime oca) Ime

JMBG ili datum rođenja [ ] 07 [ ]

Adresa stanovanja [ ]

Ime i adresa rodbine [ ]

Čin - zanimanje [ ] Jedinica - mjesto [ ]

Pripadnost: ZNG TO MUP CIVIL Ostali podaci za identifikaciju [ ]

Označi ozljedu	Vrsta ozljede	Vrijeme i mjesto ranjavanja
	Op So <input checked="" type="radio"/> Eo K BoT	[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] Godina Mjesec Dan Sat Mjesto Dijagnoza: Šifra dg. po MKB: [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

Dekontaminacija: Potpuna Djelomična Nije učinjena I II III Moribundan

Hitnost: [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

Legenda: Op - opekline; So - strijelna ozljeda; Bo - eksplozivna ozljeda; K - kontuzija; BoT - bojni otrov

Upisni broj [ ]

**RANJENIČKI KARTON**  
 KLINIKA ZA DječJE BOLESTI ZAGREB  
 KLINIKA ZA DječJU KIRURGIJU  
 Zdravstvena ustanova - mjesto  
 BAKUŠIĆ STANKO  
 Prezime, (Ime oca) Ime

JMBG ili datum rođenja [ ] 21.08.1944 [ ]

Adresa stanovanja [ ] ZAPREŠIĆ [ ]

Ime i adresa rodbine [ ]

Čin - zanimanje [ ] Jedinica - mjesto [ ]

Pripadnost: ZNG TO MUP  CIVIL Ostali podaci za identifikaciju [ ]

Označi ozljedu	Vrsta ozljede	Vrijeme i mjesto ranjavanja
	Op So <input checked="" type="radio"/> Eo K BoT	95.05.03.12 Godina Mjesec Dan Sat D BOLONIA Mjesto Dijagnoza: v. cl. op. h thoracis Šifra dg. po MKB: [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

Dekontaminacija: Potpuna Djelomična Nije učinjena I II III Moribundan

Hitnost: [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

Legenda: Op - opekline; So - strijelna ozljeda; Bo - eksplozivna ozljeda; K - kontuzija; BoT - bojni otrov

## CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL ZAGREB Zagreb, Klaićeva 16

### RECORD

of the inspection of the buildings of the Children's Hospital Zagreb, Klaićeva 16, Zagreb, following war-related destruction on May 3, 1995, conducted on May 5, 1995 (between 9:00 and 17:00).

The following members of the Commission were present:

- Dr. Željko Cvetko, Chair of the Commission
- Tanja Urbić, M.Sc. Arch. – Croatian Health Insurance Fund Directorate
- Osman Kadić, M.Sc. Econ.
- Prim. Dr. Željko Milić
- Ante Buntić – Civil Engineering Technician
- Zlatko Srdak, M.Sc. Eng.
- Ana-Maria Bogdanović, LL.M. – Secretary of the Commission

### Findings of the inspection:

1. **Flat roof at Deželićeva 33**, total area 308.00 m<sup>2</sup>. Damage to the roof covers approximately 105 m<sup>2</sup>. The existing waterproofing is of the classic type with natural gravel topping. Roof repair is required.
2. **Flat inaccessible roof "Center 2"**, area 420.00 m<sup>2</sup>. Damaged in about twenty places with small craters 25–40 cm in diameter and 5–10 cm deep. Existing waterproofing consists of welded Bitufix strips. Roof ventilation outlets (8 units) made of galvanized sheet metal (50×50 cm, height 40 cm) are damaged. The metal flashing is partially damaged and partially detached from the structure. Complete repair of the flat roof over the entire 420.00 m<sup>2</sup> is required due to the high number of damaged areas. A higher-quality waterproofing solution is recommended.
3. **Flat roof – New building** Damage at one location including the metal flashing. Repair required.
4. **Roof above the staircase of "Center 2"** Constructed partially from galvanized sheet metal (approx. 10.00 m<sup>2</sup>) and partially from corrugated fibre cement panels (salonit). Both coverings are damaged. Full replacement of the galvanized sheet metal and partial replacement of the corrugated panels (20 sheets) is required.
5. **Pitched roof above the "Center 1" building** Partially damaged. Covering consists of corrugated fibre cement panels. Partial replacement of 5 panels is required.
6. **Canopy above the balcony of the surgical tract (next to operating rooms)** Damaged. Constructed from corrugated polyester panels. Replacement of the entire 18 m<sup>2</sup> covering is required.
7. **Roofs above the waiting rooms of the Mental Health Department, Cytology Laboratory, and Neurology Outpatient Clinic** Damaged. Structure consists of steel profiles, covering made of reinforced glass panels, and ceiling lining of ornamental glass plates.

Replacement of both types of glass panels is required, covering approximately 70 m<sup>2</sup>. The horizontal and vertical roof drainage adjacent to the glass roof is damaged in multiple places and requires complete replacement.

8. The central heating and water supply installations located within the glass roof structure above the waiting rooms of the Mental Health Protection Department, Paediatric Clinic, Cytology Laboratory, and Neurology Outpatient Clinic are damaged. Repairs are required in this section.
9. Window glass damage was recorded on the following facades:
  - 9.1. Deželićeva Street – north side – 5% damaged – standard glass, thickness 3 mm
  - 9.2. Deželićeva Street – south side – 40% damaged – standard glass
  - 9.3. “Center 2” – east (above the roof) and north – 100% damaged – area constructed with double glazing (ornamental glass inside, standard glass outside)
  - 9.4. Exit to the flat roof of “Center 2” and entrance to the photocopy room – 100% damaged – wired glass
  - 9.5. “Center 2” – west and south – 100% damaged – standard glass, thickness 6 mm – window frames on the ground floor dislodged from the wall due to detonation
  - 9.6. “Center 1” (ENT outpatient waiting room) – 15 m<sup>2</sup> – standard glass, thickness 3 mm
  - 9.7. “Center 1” – west side – 10% damaged – standard glass, thickness 6 mm
  - 9.8. Glazed balcony of the surgical tract, first floor – 50% glazed – standard glass, thickness 6 mm
  - 9.9. New building – 130 m<sup>2</sup> – triple-layered insulated glass
  - 9.10. Connecting bridge – reinforced glass – 50% damaged + standard glass, thickness 6 mm – 5% damaged

According to the instructions of the City of Zagreb Administration, specifically Mr. Biškupić, window glazing is currently underway. The exact surface area will be determined by the contractor “Staklo” from Vlaška Street in Zagreb.

10. The surgical tract contains two operating rooms – right and left. Each room has two windows measuring 3×2 m, two of which are casement windows, and the middle one is fixed at the bottom and tilting at the top. The window glass is damaged, and the casement and tilting windows cannot be opened. According to Prim. Dr. Milić, this is a result of detonations. Replacement is required.
11. Exterior aluminium blinds are partially damaged – approximately 30% of the eastern facade. Plastic blinds on the building at Deželićeva 33, south facade – approximately 40% damaged.
12. Visible damage to walls and ceilings was observed in parts of the outpatient tract, specifically in the Mental Health Protection Department, Cytology Laboratory of the Diagnostic Service, Neurology Outpatient Clinic, laboratory corridor, and staircase at Deželićeva 33.

Partial masonry repairs (plastering) are required, as well as painting and decorating works.

13. Part of the equipment of the Paediatric Clinic and medical devices in the laboratory and outpatient section has been damaged and will be officially recorded by expert commissions.

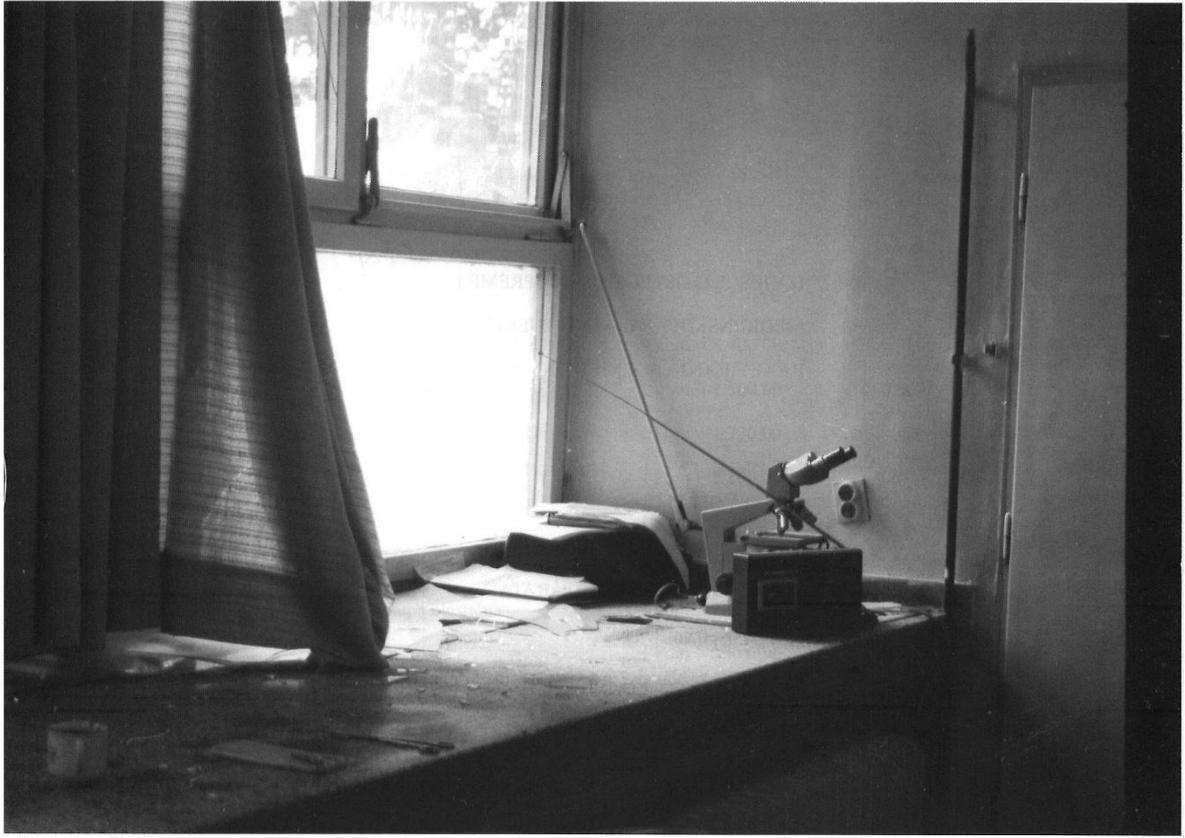
**Conclusion:**

1. A detailed and high-quality cost estimate must be prepared to serve as the basis for a public tender for execution. Engineer Weiner from the company ABC 51, Preobraženska 5, Zagreb, has offered to assist the Clinic in preparing the cost estimate free of charge.
2. Due to damage to the roof and façade, and the urgency of repairs (exposure to weather), a request must be submitted to the Ministry of Health for exemption from the investment bank (Official Gazette NN 70/91 and 49/92).
3. Any additional damage discovered later will be officially recorded.

Attached to the minutes is a damage assessment of the buildings amounting to HRK 752,600.00.

**Members of the Commission:**

1. Dr. Željko Cvetko
2. Tanja Urbić, M.Sc. Arch. – Croatian Health Insurance Fund Directorate
3. Osman Kadić, M.Sc. Econ.
4. Prim. Dr. Željko Milić
5. Ante Buntić, Civil Engineering Technician
6. Zlatko Srdak, M.Sc. Eng. **Secretary of the Commission:** Ana-Maria Bogdanović, LL.M.



**CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL ZAGREB MEDICAL EQUIPMENT SERVICE** Klaićeva 16, 41000 Zagreb

**REPORT ON DAMAGE TO EQUIPMENT AND MEDICAL DEVICES DURING THE SHELLING OF THE HOSPITAL ON MAY 3, 1995**

**1. LIST OF EQUIPMENT**

**2. LIST OF MEDICAL DEVICES**

**a/** Completely destroyed:

**b/** Requires repair and service assessment for further functionality:

**Assistant Director for Medical Affairs**

Dr. Željko Cvetko

## EQUIPMENT LIST

No.	Equipment Name	Quantity	Unit Price (HRK)	Total (HRK)
1.	Filing cabinets	3	3,400.00	10,200.00
2.	Examination table	1	3,000.00	3,000.00
3.	Writing desk	3	1,200.00	3,600.00
4.	Doctor's desk	1	1,300.00	1,300.00
5.	Children's table	18	100.00	1,800.00
6.	Metal table	2	1,100.00	2,200.00
7.	Plastic bench	1	1,000.00	1,000.00
8.	Chairs	40	150.00	6,000.00
9.	Children's chairs	36	100.00	3,600.00
10.	Coat racks	3	300.00	900.00
11.	Metal shelves	2	1,000.00	2,000.00
12.	Canon photocopier	1	25,252.00	25,252.00

**TOTAL: HRK 64,052.00** *Prices are expressed in Croatian Kuna.*

**LETTER from Prim. Dr. Fattorini to Prof. Dr. Höllwarth**

Michael E. Hollwarth, M.D.,  
Organizing and Scientific Committees  
of the 1st European Congress  
of Paediatric Surgery, Graz, Austria  
Congress Centre Graz  
Fax. 43316826467 Zagreb, May 3rd , 1995. 2 PM  
Dear colleagues,

Today, May 3rd 1995 Children's Hospital Zagreb was directly bombed by Serbian terrorists with ORKAN, cluster bombs (prohibited by all international conventions). There is more than 125 wounded people in Zagreb, and today in our Hospital 1 person was killed, and 5 persons heavy wounded. Windows were broken, shrapnels are still in our operating rooms and almost everywhere in the Hospital. All children -our young patients are still at shelter. We are not in possibility to come and participate your Congress.

Best wishes to all Involved at the work of the 1st European Congress of Paediatric Surgery from Croatian paediatric surgeons.

Ivan Fattorini, M. D.  
Paediatric surgeon,  
Director of the Hospital

# WASHINGTON POST

## 4 MAY

### Bloody Ballet in Zagreb

*Children's Hospital, Dance Rehearsal Struck*

By John Pamfret

ZAGREB, Croatia. May 3 Rebel Serb rockets slammed into down-Town Zagreb for the second day running today, hitting a children's hospital and a ballet rehearsal hall. Authorities reported the antipersonnel explosives killed one person and wounded at least 43, including 21 members of a visiting dance troupe preparing to perform "Birds of Paradise"

U.N. negotiators announced shortly after the rocket attack that the Croatian government and rebel Serbs have agreed to a cease-fire in the Serb-held northeastern Croatian enclave that was reoccupied by government troops during a swift military thrust on Monday. If carried out, the new truce would formalize the Croatian army's biggest gains since the Croat-Serb war that divided the country in 1991.

Fighting halted in the embattled pocket following the 4 p.m. ceasefire announcement. But that diplomatic achievement was overshadowed by what happened here in the Croatian capital, which had until now been spared much of the horror inflicted on civilians in Sarajevo, the capital of neighboring Bosnia.

Peter Galbraith, the U.S. ambassador to Croatia, charged that the lunchtime rocket attack was timed to kill as many people as possible. The rockets, equipped with cluster munitions that spew shrapnel, were fired by Serb forces retaliating against the recapture by more than 3,000 Croatian troops of a 16-mile stretch of highway and two nearby towns occupied by the secessionist Serbs since 1991. Over the past two days, more than a dozen rockets from the Serbs' M-87 Orkan multiple launchers have hit the heart of this city of 1 million people. It has been the most serious bombardment Zagreb has experienced in Croatia's conflict with the Serbs, who are trying to create a breakaway state. The attacks have left six dead and about 175 wounded. During the 1991 war, Serb war-planes struck once at the Presidential Palace here, but never have Serbs hit Zagreb with such ferocity. Residents of Sarajevo, besieged for three years, claim to be accustomed to Serb tactics of targeting civilians. But the people of

Zagreb, who have spent much of the past four years watching horrible things happen to their neighbors, were shocked.

President Franjo Tudjman, a former general in the Yugoslav army, appeared on state-run television and warned the Serbs that if they repeat the attacks, The Croatian army will respond decisively to prevent any further terrorism—"Such bellicosity touched a chord among the people here," said Elvira Ulip, a costume designer who was in the Academy of Dramatic Arts when one rocket crashed into a rehearsal hall near her office.

The Vienna-based Danube Ballet Company was in the midst of a rehearsal and shrapnel from the blast wounded 21 dancers, said Andrija Djordjevic, head of surgery at the Hospitals, of the Sisters of Mercy.

1 Bloody tutus and ballet slippers littered the ball, a witness said. Among the dancers who underwent surgery was Zagreb's most famous ballerina Almira Osmanovic, who suffered a minor shrapnel wound to her left leg. Nine other dancers required surgery. Djordjevic said; two were seriously wounded. Other hospital officials said the injured dancers hailed from Ukraine, Russia, Romania and Britain, "Why are they attacking innocent civilians, even dancers?" Ulip asked. It is madness."

Several other projectiles plowed into the Children's Hospital three blocks away, injuring seven people, including a 3-month-old girl and the teenage daughter of Deputy Prime Minister Ivan Kostanica, Kostanica had led a team of officials that negotiated Tuesday's surrender of Croatian Serbs around the once-divided town of Pakrac following the successful Croatian army assault. One police officer was killed when he attempted to remove an unexploded grenade from the hospital's courtyard, hospital staff said. The grenade detonated and blew him apart, hurling his jaw onto a balcony one story above. Another shell crashed into an operating theater, wounding a nurse.

The hospital's director, Ivan Fattorini, ordered all of the hospital's 300 patients into the basement for

protection. In the hospital's cellar, hundreds of children lay on triple-decker beds amid the roar of the ventilation system and the cries of babies, both restless and sick.

Under terms of the cease-fire announced by the United Nations, Croatian government forces will keep the territory regained in Monday's attack.

The inability of the U.N. mission in the Balkans to avert the fighting, and the United Nations' role now of legitimizing the Croatian advance, raised a question for the mission in both Croatia and neighboring Bosnia: How can the United Nations convince the battling factions in those two countries that a solution to Yugoslavia's wars of secession lies at the negotiating table and not through the barrel of a gun?

U.N. negotiators and Western diplomats have contended ever since war erupted in the Balkans as the Yugoslav federation disintegrated that a resolution could only be found by peace talks. Yet so far, only war has furthered the competing sides' aims.

But while the Croatian attack Monday was the largest in this country since 1991, it was still limited to about 10 percent of Croatian territory. In that sense it mirrored the military brush fires flaring around Bosnia, where a cease-fire in effect since January ran out on Monday. U.N. military officers have predicted that Bosnia is likely to see more of the same in the months ahead, and now that may be true of Croatia as well. In any case, a senior Western diplomat remarked that the speed with which the Croatian army retook the Serb enclave in northeastern Croatia indicated it has improved remarkably since the 1991 war—As a result, he added, a new power equation could evolve; The Croatian army and its on-again-off-again ally, the Muslim-run Bosnian government, are strengthening, while secessionist Serb forces in Croatia as well as Bosnia are slowly weakening. UN military observers along the front lines said today that one of the key reasons the Croatian Serb forces gave way so quickly was that the help they expected from their Bosnian Serb allies never came.

Still, the rocket attacks on Zagreb were a blunt reminder that the Croatian Serbs still possess deadly fire-power and the will to use it.



## POPIS RANJENIH DJELATNIKA BALETA HNK S PREPORUČENOM TERAPIJOM

1. BARBANOVANDREJ

Dg.: Vulnere explosiva art. TC dex., cruris sin., regionis lumbalis dex., reg. nuchae et infraclavicularis dex. Th.: 14 x 1,2,4,5

2. GOBAC DEANA

Dg.: Infractio báseos phalangae med. dig. III manus dex. Th.: 14x 2,4,6,5

3. KRŽIĆ VALENTINA

Dg.: Vulnere explosiva brachii sin., dígiti IV manus sin. et tegmenti thoracis Th.: 14x 1,5,4

4. PUK LOVORKA

Dg.: Vulnere explosiva cruris dex. Th.: 14x 1,3,4,5

5. VASE NICOLAE

Dg.: Vulnere explosiva thoracis et malleoli lat. cruris dex. Th.: 14x 1,2,3,4

6. BRKLJAČIĆ DARKO

Dg.: Vulnere explosiva reg.lumbalis sin. Th.: 14x 1,2,5,6

7. SPORIŠ MIRNA

Dg.: Vulnere explosiva capitis reg. front., tegmenti abdominis, glutei et genus dex., Contractura genus Th.: 14x 1,3,4;5

8. KOLŠEK DUBRAVKO

Dg.: Vulnere explosiva omeris sin., glutei bilat. et cruris sin. Th.: 14x 1,3,4,5

9. OSMANOVIČ ALMIRA

Dg.: Vulnus expl. femoris sin. Th.: 14x 1,3,4,5

10. BOLDIN MARK

Dg.: Vul. expl. hemithoracis dex., abdominis dex., femoris dex. et genus dex.

Laesio renis dex.

Nephrectomia dex. facta Th.: 14x 1,2,4,5

11. DAS KALU DANUTI

Dg.: Vulnere expl. hemithoracis sin., antebrachii sin., Fractura radii sin. Th.: 14x 1,2,4,6

12. DASKALU VIOREL

Dg.: Vulnere expl. thoracis I. dex., glutei et lumbalis sin.

Rupturae intestini jejuni multipl.. Phneumothorax I. dex. Th.: 14x 1,2,3,6

13. PUČKO MATEA

Dg.: Vulnere expl. capitis, femoris et cruris dex.,

Th.:14x 1,2,3,4

14. BARBARA NOVKOVIĆ

Dg.: Vulnus expl. cruris et calcael dex.

Th.: 14x 1.2.3.4

## FROM THE PRESS

**Der Bund**, May 4 – A. Mayer *"Little patients sat frightened in the darkness of the underground shelter."*

**The Times**, May 4 – A. Loyd *"Behind the heavy doors of the underground shelter of the Children's Hospital in Zagreb, around 400 children were huddled on iron beds in a shelter of bare concrete walls. Some of them only a few days old, wrapped in diapers, lay like dolls quietly in two cramped corners."*

**The Times**, May 4 – J. Brand *"A barbaric revenge for the successful two-day offensive by government forces in Western Slavonia."*

**Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung**, May 5, 1995 – M. Rub *"Anyone seeking a rational explanation for why a city of millions, why a children's hospital, is not spared Serbian destructiveness."*

**The Washington Post**, May 4 – J. Pamfret *"Children at the Zagreb Children's Hospital will not be allowed to walk through the hospital park for a long time. Many of the 288 unexploded bombs still threaten from rooftops and tree canopies in the hospital courtyard."*

**The Washington Times**, May 4 – T. Wayr *"Shock for the young patients after grenade fragments flew into their hospital rooms."*

**The New York Times**, May 4 – R. Cohen *"Our ambassador gave an accurate assessment of the events."*

**La Prealpina**, May 4 – A. Virdo *"The 400 children from the Children's Hospital in Zagreb will have nowhere to return once they leave their concrete shelters. All the windows of the hospital rooms have been destroyed, as well as the main operating theatres."*

**Il Sole 24 Ore**, May 4 – E. Ragusin *"Despite all the destruction, the hospital remained operational. The wounded received care, and the children in the shelter were given all necessary attention."*

**La Stampa**, May 4 – I. Badurina *"The Children's Hospital that was directly hit is only 100 meters away from the Italian Embassy."*

**Avvenire**, May 4 – W. Skerk *"The youngest injured was a four-month-old baby, Ana Marija Risović — fortunately, according to the surgeon, only lightly wounded."*

**Le Monde**, May 5 *"A hospital courtyard soaked in blood, hallways littered with glass, a destroyed surgical block. That scene finally forced even the usually silent diplomats to speak out clearly."*

## **A CRIME THAT CANNOT BE JUSTIFIED BY ANYTHING**

The rocket attack on Zagreb provoked outrage around the world. One of the targets was the Children's Hospital in Klaićeva Street.

Croatian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Mate Granić, stated that the shelling of Zagreb was a crime that cannot be justified by anything. Children, civilians, hospitals, schools, and cultural institutions were affected in the attack. Granić emphasized that this was a barbaric act that sparked indignation across the globe.

Representatives of the international community, including diplomats and humanitarian organizations, visited the Children's Hospital in Klaićeva and expressed deep concern over the targeting of civilian sites. At the time of the attack, more than 400 children were in the hospital, some of whom were injured. Hospital facilities were damaged, and medical staff continued to provide care under extremely difficult conditions.

The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia announced it would investigate the circumstances of the attack and determine accountability for the crimes committed. The attack on Zagreb — especially on the Children's Hospital — was condemned in numerous international media outlets.



**EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

Zagreb, Croatia, Office of The Ambassador

May 18, 1995

Ivan Fattorini, M.D.  
Director  
Children's Hospital Zagreb  
Zagreb University Medical School  
Klaiceva 16  
41000 Zagreb

Dear Dr. Fattorini:

This is to respond to your request for impressions from my visit to the Children's Hospital on the day it was attacked.

About 45 minutes after the attack, Foreign Minister Granić called me and asked if I would accompany him to the Children's Hospital. When we arrived, we could see clear evidence of the attack: broken glass along corridors, the hole in the ceiling of the waiting room and blood from the victims, the damaged operating room, and the police on nearby roofs looking for cluster bombs. My most enduring impression was, however, of the children. Hundreds of children were crammed into basement shelters, along with anxious parents and relatives. Frankly I never thought I would see such scenes in a European city in my lifetime. From what I could see the hospital staff performed admirably and I am sure the children's physical care did not suffer too much. Undoubtedly it will be longer before the psychological scars heal. After all, a hospital is a scary place for a child. How much more frightening the experience must be when a place dedicated to making a sick child healthy is itself subject to intentional military attack.

As I said at the time, sending rockets armed with cluster bombs into the center of a crowded city in the middle of the day was intended for one purpose and one purpose alone: to kill as many people as possible. I spoke for the American people when I called the rocket attack a barbaric act.

My sympathies are with the families and friends of those killed in the rocket attacks of May 2 and 3, and I wish all those injured a speedy recovery. We must not forget that such attacks are a daily event in the nearby European capital of Sarajevo, and we must now redouble our efforts to end all such barbarism. As what happened at the Children's Hospital on May 3 clearly demonstrates, it is the innocents who are invariably victims of this evil war.

Sincerely,  
Peter W. Galbraith

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter W. Galbraith". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.



## **AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS**

May 4, 1995

Slobodan Milosevic President of Serbia  
Fax. 011-381-11-659-756

Dear Mr, Milosevic

We of the American Academy of Pediatrics condemn the indiscriminate missile attacks by separatist Croat Serb forces utilizing antipersonnel cluster bombs upon the civilian population of Zagreb. In particular we condemn and protest the bombardment of the Children's Hospital of Zagreb on May 3, 1995 at noon which resulted in death of 1 policeman and injuries to 4 parents, 1 child, and 2 hospital staff. Several hundred ill children had to be evacuated to a basement shelter. Today hundreds of potentially lethal cluster bomblets remain in and around the hospital.

Attacks on the injured and ill, medical personnel, and medical facilities are considered war crimes and represent direct violations of the Geneva Conventions and Protocols. Furthermore, international law clearly states that under conditions of war children must be the object of special respect and protected from assault.

The American Academy of Pediatrics requests that you and your leaders condemn such wanton attacks on children, civilians and medical facilities, and that you exert your influence to assure that such attacks are not repeated.

Sincerely,

George D. Comerchi,  
President

M,D. Maurice E. Keenan, M-D,  
Vice President

CC: Borislav Mikelić  
Milan Martić



**EMBASSY OF PAKISTAN  
ZAGREB (CROATIA)  
AMBASSADOR**

Dated 18 May 1995

I, alongwith other diplomatic colleagues, had a chance to visit Childrens' Hospital Zagreb immediately after its shelling on May, 3rd 1995. We went around to see the damage done to the hospital and met some of wounded in the shelling by desperate and demoralized aggressor.

Such attacks on innocent civilians, more so on children hospital, only indicate moral bankruptcy, cowardice and disregard to all norma of civilised behaviour by the aggressors. This was barbarious and deplorable act which needs to be condemned and censured by all civilised nations of the world. I avail this oportunity to express my appreciation for the courage and determination displayed by the hospital administration and those wounded in the attack. I wish you all health and safety in future as well.

M. Rashid Beg  
General (Retired)  
Ambassador Islamic Republic of Pakistan



**British Embassy  
From the Ambassador**

Zagreb 25 May 1995

Dr. Ivan Fattorini  
Director  
Children's Hospital Zagreb  
Zagreb University Medical School

Thank you for your letter of 16 May about the shelling of the children's hospital on 3 May. As I said at the time, a rocket attack on a population centre is barbaric and criminal. The fact that one of the rockets landed on the children's hospital in Zagreb serves to underline the point. When I visited the hospital on 3 May, I was moved by the way that you and all your staff were going about your business in such extraordinary circumstances. The conditions in the basement shelter and the faces of worried staff and parents looking after tiny children will stay with me for a long time.

I hope that the hospital can get back soon to working as an institution of excellence, caring for the babies and the young children of Zagreb and the area.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G W Hewitt', with a large, stylized initial 'G'.

Sincerely,  
G W Hewitt

**Zagreb, May 22, 1995 APOSTOLIC NUNCIATURE IN CROATIA**

Dear Dr. Ivan Fattorini,

Director of the Children's Hospital

Klaićeva 16

ZAGREB

Dear Sir,

In your letter dated May 17, 1995, you asked me to share my impressions regarding the shelling of the Children's Hospital on May 3, 1995.

Accompanied by Dr. Ivo Sanader, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, I visited the Children's Hospital in Klaićeva Street that day together with members of the diplomatic corps. The traces of death of the tragically killed police officer, the damage to the hospital building, and the concern of the people I met there—all of this evoked heavy impressions and questions that are almost impossible to answer. Why do such terrible things happen? Why were "Orkan" rockets used, designed solely to kill people? Why did death threaten the smallest, most vulnerable patients?

As a man of faith, I thanked the Lord for preventing an even greater tragedy that could have claimed more lives. At the same time, I was deeply shaken by the destructive force of evil that does not choose its means to carry out its vengeful intentions. I shared the fear and concern of the citizens of Zagreb, standing in solidarity with them in condemning all violence, especially violence directed at a medical institution.

On that occasion, as the representative of the Holy Father in the Republic of Croatia, I conveyed to all citizens of Zagreb the Pope's concern over all forms of suffering, as well as his comfort and encouragement to all those affected by the consequences of war.

With expressions of deep respect,

Giulio Einaudi, Apostolic Nuncio

**EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA** To: Mr. Primarius Ivan Fattorini, M.D. Director of the Children's Hospital Zagreb

Thank you for your letter dated May 17, 1995. Please accept my apologies for not having had the opportunity to respond until now.

The duty to bear witness and objectively inform my Government, other competent authorities, and the people of Slovenia about the aggression against Croatia, the destruction of war, human suffering, and criminal, terrorist acts against innocent civilians is, without a doubt, one of the most difficult professional responsibilities I have faced in my diplomatic career. When the victims of such sick minds are children, it becomes especially hard to restrain emotions, maintain a cool head, and uphold the necessary detachment expected of a diplomat.

I assure you, dear Director, that I have faithfully and, I hope, convincingly conveyed the circumstances and insights I gathered when, in the absence of Ambassador Mr. Malešič, I visited your clinic as chargé d'affaires just an hour or two after the criminals targeted your esteemed institution with two missiles.

I was truly impressed by the efficiency and calmness with which the staff of the Children's Clinic managed to shelter so many children during the most difficult moments, all while avoiding any panic. On the contrary, as I watched the children and their worried parents in the dark and cramped underground corridors, I was convinced that despite their illnesses, the distance from their homes, and the evil people sending them bells of death, the children never lost trust in the medical staff of your hospital. There were no cries or sobs – only wide, astonished eyes, with pupils larger than those of children who can play fearlessly in sandpits.

ABDREJ ŽLEBNIK

COUNSELLOR

Zagreb, May 29, 1995



COUNCIL OF EUROPE    CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

**COUNCIL OF EUROPE**

SECRETARIAT GENERAL  
Strasbourg, 13 June 1995

Mr Ivan Fattorini, M.D.  
Director of the Children's Hospital  
Zagreb University Medical School  
Klaiceva 16,  
CRO- 41000 ZAGREB

Dear Dr Fattorini,

Though I came to visit you on questions of doping in sport (please adopt, by law or in the Croatian Olympic Committee, appropriate regulations quickly!), I have to say that the most moving part of my stay in Zagreb was when you kindly took me round your hospital.

After the unspeakable horror and savagery of the bomb attack on a children's hospital, I left profoundly impressed by the utmost professionalism, courage, care and love of your nurses and staff for their patients. The children are in excellent hands. I hope that you may be able to transmit this message to those I met and you will accept my congratulations to yourself on what is quite evidently the most outstanding leadership in such difficult conditions.

Yours sincerely, George WALKER, Head of the Sports Division

## **Reactions to the Attack**

**Mr. Peter Galbraith for CNN:** "One should understand what has gone on – Cluster bombs on the rockets sent into the centre of a European capital are intended to kill lots of people. Furthermore, the timing of the attacks, not at night but right in the middle of the day, during a lunch hour, is further evidence that the sole single purpose was to kill as many people as possible. It's an utter outrage."

**Dr. J. Njavro, *Večernji list*, May 4:** "The strikes on Zagreb, especially today on the Children's Hospital, were deliberate and show that the enemy does not change its nature. It takes me back to Vukovar, where they first targeted nursing homes, kindergartens, hospitals. What fascinated me in these events was the dignified composure of the people of Zagreb."

**B. Mikša, *Večernji list*, May 4:** "The Children's Hospital today is proof of complete madness on the opposing side."

**V. Pejnović, Member of the Serbian People's Party in the Croatian Parliament, in a letter to V. Knežević, Head of the Yugoslav Bureau in Zagreb:** "The bombing of the Children's Hospital cannot be explained by anything. It is a despicable act."

**ZAGREB POLICE DEPARTMENT, BOMB DISPOSAL UNIT** Zagreb, May 15, 1995

**IVAN MARKULIN**, born May 29, 1967, in Zagreb. He completed primary school in Kravarsko and secondary school in Zagreb. On March 25, 1991, he joined the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Croatia, serving as a police officer at Zagreb Airport. After completing a basic course in bomb disposal, he worked as a bomb disposal operator at the airport.

At the end of 1993, he completed a specialization in bomb disposal, and from January 18, 1994, he served as a bomb disposal officer in the Bomb Disposal Unit of the Zagreb Police Department.

During his time in the unit, he actively participated in the most complex tasks of removing explosive devices, including after the accident in Duboki Jarak, as well as in routine operations involving the removal of explosive devices found throughout Zagreb County.

As part of preventive bomb disposal duties, he regularly inspected venues for public gatherings and locations visited by high-ranking officials of the Republic of Croatia and foreign dignitaries. For his contribution to the security arrangements during the visit of Pope John Paul II, he received a written commendation from the Minister of the Interior.

Due to his persistence and dedicated approach to work, his colleagues affectionately nicknamed him “BAGY,” likening him to a tireless and powerful work machine—a bulldozer.

On the final day of his life, when the Serbo-Chetnik terrorist machinery targeted the civilian population of Zagreb with long-range death-dealing weapons, he went without hesitation to the Children’s Hospital to help restore its operations as quickly as possible.

As a father of two children himself, he was deeply shocked by the very act of attacking an institution dedicated to healing children, which gave him a special motivation to work that day.

Tragically, this was Ivan Markulin’s final intervention.

He left behind an indelible memory of a quiet, modest, calm, and always action-ready man – our BAGY.



***"To shell civilians in broad daylight is, in itself, horrifying.***

***To shell hospitals is a supreme crime.***

***To shell a Children's Hospital – there are no words for that."***

*Primarius Ivan Fattorini, M.D., Director of the Children's Hospital*



May 03, 2025