

Savo Štrbac

Biography information

My name is Savo Strbac. I was born in 1949, in v. Rastevic near Benkovac, Croatia. Till 4 August 1995 I lived in a socially-owned flat in Benkovac. From then on, I have resided in Belgrade, as a refugee. I am married and a father of two.

I earned a BA degree in law at the University of Zagreb Law Faculty in 1972, and passed my bar exam there, four years later.

From 1977 to 1990 I was a judge of the Municipal Court in Benkovac and of the District Court in Zadar.

When the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) party came to power in the Republic of Croatia (RC), I quit my post as judge and set up a law office, as a member of the Croatian Bar Association, in Korenica, on 1st November 1990. During 1990 and 1991, I legally represented and defended persecuted Serbs in Croatia. In 1992-1995, as a member of the Bar of the Republic of Serbian Krajina (RSK), I was the counsel of parties before the law courts of the RSK. On my arrival in Belgrade, again as a member of the Serbian Bar Association, I continued to practise law up to 2011, when I retired because of my illness.

From the outbreak of war onwards I was involved in the work of the RSK Commission for Prisoner Exchanges, at first as a Commission member and from 1993 as its Chairman. The same year, I also became Secretary of the RSK Government, and I held these posts until the end of war. In peace-time I have been active on the Commissions for Humanitarian Issues and Missing / Disappeared Persons of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) and of the Bosnian Serb Republic of Srpska (RS), where I used to and still enjoy status of an expert specializing in the region of RC.

Veritas

At the end of 1993, in cooperation with a group of intellectuals having medical and legal backgrounds from the areas of the then RSK (former UNPA areas), I established a Documentation and Information Centre "Veritas" which I have been heading from its inception.

The Centre was based in Knin before the exodus of the Krajina Serbs (August/95) and now in Belgrade, with offices in Banja Luka.

Until August 1995, the activities of VERITAS were focused on the gathering of documentary evidence of the suffering of Serbs in the areas of RC and of all inhabitants of the RSK and their property in pre-war, war and post-war periods; publication of gathered and analyzed documentary evidence and their submission to local and international institutions in order to initiate prosecution of those responsible for crimes against humanity and international law.

In November 1994, VERITAS established direct contacts with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and agreed cooperation between them.

Even after the Serb exodus, though working in difficult circumstances, VERITAS has been engaged in the settlement of newly created problems of Croatian Serbs, such as: PoWs, killed and missing persons; destruction and looting of property; regulation of the status of a refugee and expellee in a new community; return of refugees to their homes, etc. It has also continued to cooperate with ICTY as a partner in all investigations into the crimes against Croatian Serb victims.

VERITAS used to cooperate, and continues to cooperate with organisations and institutions, national and international, dealing with problems related to PoWs, missing persons/enforced disappearances and killed in the territory of the former Yugoslavia.

VERITAS representatives actively participated in the meetings of state commissions of Serbia, Croatia and of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH).

VERITAS cooperated and cooperates also with international humanitarian organisations (ICRC, UNHCR, ICMP, and OSCE) that used to have their offices in the territories of Serbia, BiH and Croatia, and it has been actively cooperating in the last few years also with the judicial authorities in the region, especially with the war crimes prosecutor's offices in Serbia and BiH.

VERITAS, now with offices in Belgrade and Banja Luka, has a six permanent staff (three engaged full-time and three volunteers) and a number of contract associates of various educational backgrounds.