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Should PTSD suffering patients be blamed for the combat related crimes in former Yugoslavia?

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Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is often used as an excuse, for the war crimes defense in front of the court of the law. In our analysis of the 150 persons, accused for the war crimes in the war in former Yugoslavia, the results were as follows: Most of the evaluated war crime performers, 128 of them, suffered from the severe personality disorder, mostly antisocial, but also borderline and narcissistic. They usually committed a crime that was documented by a photo or a video recording, as a kind of the trophy collecting proof. Twelve of them were psychotic, whose crimes were committed without selection, e.g., three houses in a row, in one village, in the phase known as “narrowing of the conscience”, triggered by the war happenings. Two of them were had a delusional order from God to kill people from the different religion. Ten people committed a combat crime as the revenge for the prior loss of the family members. Eight of them showed no specific psychiatric pathology, but they were ordered to kill mostly the prisoners of war by a senior officer. Only two suffered from pronounced PTSD, who were firstly captured from the opposite side, and then released under the mediation of the Red Cross. Both were driven by an unexplainable impulse to protect themselves from another imprisoning by the opponent side, killed the imprisoned soldiers in the enemy uniforms. Definitely, PTSD suffering war veterans seldom commit war crimes, and, according to our experience, combat crimes were performed by a person suffering from serious personality disorder.

Biography

Branislav Filipovic is a full time Professor of Anatomy in the School of Medicine, University of Belgrade, Serbia. He is a specialist of psychiatry, oriented towards the brain changes in psychiatric disorders, especially PTSD. In 2007, he was elected for a permanent court expert for psychiatry and war traumas. He has published more than 30 papers in neuroanatomy and brain alterations in the psychiatric disorders.

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