



United Nations
Nations Unies



International
Criminal Tribunal
for the former
Yugoslavia

Tribunal Pénal
International pour
l'ex-Yougoslavie



PRESS RELEASE

(Exclusively for the use of the media. Not an official document)

CHAMBERS

The Hague, 7 December 2005

JP/MO/1031e

MIROSLAV BRALO SENTENCED TO 20 YEARS' IMPRISONMENT

The Tribunal today sentenced Miroslav Bralo to 20 years' imprisonment for his role in the multiple murder, rape, torture, unlawful confinement and inhumane treatment of Bosnian Muslim civilians, including a number of children, in central Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) between January and mid-July 1993.

On 19 July 2005, the former member of the anti-terrorist platoon of the 4th Military Police Battalion of the Croatian Defence Council (HVO) known as the "Jokers", pleaded guilty to a broad range of war crimes committed in and around the central Bosnian villages of Ahmići and Nadioci.

In its summary of the judgement, read out in court, the Trial Chamber stated that it, "... concludes that you, Mr. Bralo, committed a range of appalling crimes, which must be condemned unequivocally. There can be no excuse or justification for your actions, nor can your reasons for abusing so many people be fathomed."

The Trial Chamber, Judges Bonomy (presiding), Robinson and Kwon, weighed the gravity of the crimes against mitigating circumstances. Primarily, the Trial Chamber considered the fact that Miroslav Bralo pleaded guilty to his crimes, stating, "*Such a guilty plea is a profound acknowledgement of personal responsibility and provides a much greater contribution to the reconciliation of people in the affected region than a finding of guilt after a trial in which the accused consistently denies his crimes. It also spares vulnerable victims and witnesses from having to testify at trial, and furthers the judicial process of the Tribunal.*"

Furthermore, the Trial Chamber noted that Miroslav Bralo had submitted evidence of his remorse, including his written and oral statements and it recognized "*his attempts to assist in the location and exhumation of the bodies of those who were killed...in the course of the attack on Ahmići.*"

In passing sentence, the Trial Chamber stated that without the mitigating circumstances outlined in the judgement, the number of years' imprisonment would have been considerably higher than the 20 year sentence imposed. In its summary, the Trial Chamber noted that it was in particular Miroslav Bralo's guilty plea prior to trial, his remorse and steps toward rehabilitation which led it to impose a lower sentence.

Miroslav Bralo will remain in the custody of the Tribunal until he is transferred to a State to serve his sentence.

Since its inception in 1993, the Tribunal has charged 161 persons for war crimes committed in the former Yugoslavia. To date, proceedings against 88 persons have concluded. Seven indicted persons remain at large.

The full summary of the judgement as read out by Judge Bonomy at today's hearing is attached and can be found on our website at www.un.org/icty.

The Trial Chamber judgement in this case can be found at www.un.org/icty.

Courtroom proceedings can be followed on the Tribunal's website.

Internet address: <http://www.un.org/icty>

Media Office/Communications Service

Churchillplein 1, 2517 JW The Hague. P.O. Box 13888, 2501 EW The Hague. Netherlands

Tel.: +31-70-512-5343; 512-5356 Fax: +31-70-512-5355