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Criminal Tribunal
for the former
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Tribunal Pénal
International pour
l'ex-Yougoslavie

PRESS RELEASE

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CHAMBERS

The Hague, 24 July 2008
NJ/MOW/PR1276e

Baton Haxhiu Found Guilty of Contempt of the Tribunal

Trial Chamber I today convicted Kosovo journalist Baton Haxhiu of contempt of Tribunal committed during the trial of the former Kosovo Albanian military leader Ramush Haradinaj and fined him 7,000 euros.

Haxhiu revealed information about a witness who testified under protective measures during the trial of Ramush Haradinaj and others.

In contravention of a Trial Chamber order, Haxhiu revealed the identity of the witness, as well as his supposed whereabouts in an article he wrote and published in Kosovo. The Trial Chamber was satisfied that Haxhiu revealed this information despite knowledge that he would be in violation of a court order.

“The Accused’s conduct could have jeopardized the security of the Witness and his family and was of a kind to undermine confidence in the effectiveness of the Tribunal’s protective measures orders, and to have the effect of dissuading witnesses from cooperating with the Tribunal,” Judge Alfons Orije said today in the court.

“It is fundamental to the fulfillment of the Tribunal’s mission that courageous individuals who come to tell their story before the Tribunal, often about traumatic or difficult experiences and away from their families and familiar surroundings, may apply to do so with the security provided by protective measures,” the judgement read.

In determining the sentence to be imposed on Haxhiu, the Trial Chamber took in account his cooperation with the Prosecution, as represented by the Defence and undisputed by the Prosecution, both during investigation of this case but also in the cases of Slobodan Milošević and Milan Milutinović et al. who were charged with war crimes committed in Kosovo.

The indictment against Haxhiu was filed on 1 April and unsealed on 20 May 2008. He pleaded not guilty to the charge of contempt at his initial appearance on 21 May and the trial took place on 24 June 2008. The Prosecution had asked for a fine of 15,000 euros to be imposed.

Haxhiu is one of three individuals charged with contempt for revealing confidential information about this witness during the trial of Haradinaj and others. The two others, Astrit Haraqija and Bajrush Morina are awaiting trial.

The Tribunal holds the safety of its witnesses and confidentiality of its protected materials in high regard. Several persons who have attempted to interfere with the judicial process by revealing confidential information or endangering witnesses have been prosecuted in the past.

An information sheet on this case is available on the Tribunal’s website at:

<http://www.un.org/icty/glance/cis-haxhiu.pdf>

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

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The full summary of the judgement

<http://www.un.org/icty/pressreal/2008/pr1276e-summary.htm>

Courtroom proceedings can be followed on the Tribunal's website

www.un.org/icty