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International pour
l'ex-Yougoslavie

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DRAGOLJUB PRCAC DETAINED BY SFOR IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA AND TRANSFERRED TO THE HAGUE

The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) welcomes the detention of Dragoljub Prcac by elements of SFOR on Sunday 5 March 2000.

Dragoljub Prcac is one of the original eight individuals charged in an indictment dated 2 June 1998 for crimes allegedly committed at the Omarska prison camp in north-western Bosnia between May and August 1992. He has been charged on the basis of his superior criminal responsibility with four counts of grave breaches of the Geneva conventions, three counts of violations of the laws or customs of war and four counts of crimes against humanity for his alleged responsibility for, among other things, the murder, torture, rape and unlawful confinement of Bosnian Muslims and Croats at Omarska.

Dragoljub Prcac, was, along with Miroslav Kvočka, a deputy to the commander of Omarska, Zeljko Meakic. Prcac and Kvočka were in positions of authority superior to everyone in the camp other than Meakic. Prior to the start of the war, both Prcac and Kvočka were officials at the Ministry of Interior in Prijedor.

Prcac is the fifth accused in the original 'Meakic and others' indictment now in detention in The Hague and his apprehension brings to 36 the number of accused in the Tribunal's custody. Twenty-nine other publicly indicted individuals remain at large.

Background on the Charges

The indictment charges that,

“Living conditions at Omarska were brutal. Prisoners were crowded together with little or no facilities for personal hygiene. They were fed starvation rations once a day and given only three minutes to get into the canteen area, eat and get out. The little water they received was ordinarily foul. Prisoners had no changes of clothing and no bedding. They received no medical care.

Severe beatings were commonplace. The camp guards, and others who came to the camp and physically abused the prisoners, used all manner of weapons during these beatings, including wooden batons, metal rods and tools, lengths of thick industrial cable that had metal balls affixed to the end, rifle butts and knives. Both female and male prisoners were beaten, tortured, raped, sexually assaulted, and humiliated. In addition to regular beatings and abuse, there were incidents of multiple killings and special terror. Many, whose identities are known and unknown, did not survive the camp.”

A time and date for his initial appearance will be announced shortly.

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

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