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Criminal Tribunal
for the former
Yugoslavia

Tribunal Pénal
International pour
l'ex-Yougoslavie

PRESS RELEASE

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TRIAL CHAMBER

The Hague, 12 June 2007

RH/MOW/1162e

MILAN MARTIĆ SENTENCED TO 35 YEARS FOR CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY AND WAR CRIMES,

Tribunal judges today sentenced Milan Martić, a former political leader of Croatian Serbs, to 35 years' imprisonment for crimes committed during the early nineties against Croats and other non-Serbs in Croatia.

Martić was convicted on 16 counts of the indictment including persecutions, murder, torture, deportation, attacks on civilians, wanton destruction of civilian areas and other crimes against humanity and violations of laws and customs of war. He was acquitted on one count of the indictment charging him with extermination.

Between 1991 and 1995, Martić held positions of Minister of Interior, Minister of Defence and President of the self-proclaimed "Serbian Autonomous Region of Krajina" (SAO Krajina), which was later renamed "Republic of Serbian Krajina" (RSK). He was found to have participated during this period in a joint criminal enterprise which included Slobodan Milošević, whose aim was to create a unified Serbian state through commission of a widespread and systematic campaign of crimes against non-Serbs inhabiting areas in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina envisaged to become parts of such a state.

The Trial Chamber found that, among others, Blagoje Adžić, Milan Babić, Radmilo Bogdanović, Veljko Kadijević, Radovan Karadžić, Slobodan Milošević, Ratko Mladić, Vojislav Šešelj, Franko "Frenki" Simatović, Jovica Stanišić, and Captain Dragan Vasiljković participated in the furtherance of the common criminal purpose of the joint criminal enterprise.

The Trial Chamber established that Martić exercised absolute authority over the Interior Ministry and, as RSK President, controlled its armed forces. As such, Martić was obligated to prevent or punish crimes but instead he abused his positions and promoted an atmosphere in which the non-Serb population was subjected to widespread and systematic crimes.

In addition, Martić was convicted of ordering rocket attacks on downtown Zagreb on 2 and 3 May 1995 in which seven people died and more than 200 were wounded. In several media statements, Martić admitted to having ordered the attacks. In a radio interview on 5 May 1995, he stated: *"That order was given by me, personally, as a retaliation to Franjo Tuđman and his staff for the order he had given to commit aggression against Western Slavonia."*

The Trial Chamber established that the majority of the crimes for which Milan Martić has been found guilty were committed against elderly people, against persons held in detention and against civilians. In determining the sentence, it took into account the effects of the crimes committed on victims and their families and noted that virtually the entire Croat and other non-Serb population was expelled from the area under Martić's control. In particular the Trial Chamber recalled the horrific injuries and the serious suffering inflicted on civilians as a consequence of the indiscriminate attacks on Zagreb, which Martić ordered.

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

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The Trial Chamber noted that Martić evaded justice for seven years in the knowledge that an indictment was issued against him. In view of this, in determining the sentence, it gave only a minimum weight to his voluntary surrender in 2002.

The initial indictment against Milan Martić was issued on 25 July 1995. After seven years on the run, he surrendered to the Tribunal on 15 May 2002. The trial started on 13 December 2005 and concluded on 13 January 2007.

Since its first hearing in November 1994, the Tribunal has indicted 161 persons with proceedings completed in the case of 107 accused. No further indictments will be issued. It is planned that the Tribunal complete its mission by the end of 2010.

The full text of the summary of the judgement can be found at the following links:

English: <http://www.un.org/icty/pressreal/2007/pr1162e-summary.htm>

French: <http://www.un.org/icty/pressreal/2007/pr1162f-summary.htm>