

Milutinović *et al.* ('Kosovo') Judgement To Be Rendered On 26 February

Press Advisory

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Milutinović *et al.* ('Kosovo') Judgement To Be Rendered On 26 February 2009

The Judgement in the Milutinović and others case, involving six senior political, military and police officials from Serbia and the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia accused of crimes in Kosovo during 1999, is scheduled to be rendered on Thursday, 26 February at 14:15 in Courtroom I.

The Judgement will be the first handed down by the Tribunal for crimes alleged to have been perpetrated by Serbian forces against Kosovo Albanians during the 1999 conflict in Kosovo.

The accused, all former associates of former Yugoslav leader Slobodan Milošević, are former Serbian President Milan Milutinović, Yugoslav Deputy Prime Minister Nikola Šainović, Yugoslav Army Chief of Staff Dragoljub Ojdanić, Yugoslav Army generals Nebojša Pavković and Vladimir Lazarević and Serbian police General Sreten Lukić.

The Prosecution accuses the six of crimes in an alleged campaign of terror and violence directed against Kosovo Albanians and other non-Serbs in Kosovo during 1999. The crimes with which they are charged include the deportation and forcible transfer of several hundred thousand people, as well as the murder and persecutions of thousands of Kosovo Albanians.

Yugoslav leader Slobodan Milošević was the first sitting head of state to be charged for war crimes when the Tribunal indicted him in 1999 for alleged crimes in Kosovo. He stood trial for the alleged offences, as well as for alleged crimes in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina between 2002 and 2006, but died from natural causes on the eve of the trial's end and prior to a judgement being rendered.

In total, the Tribunal has indicted nine of the most senior Serb and Yugoslav officials for the crimes alleged to have been carried out in Kosovo by Serb forces in 1999. Vljako Stojiljković, a senior police official close to Milošević, was indicted but committed suicide in Belgrade in 2002. Vlastimir Đorđević, former Assistant Minister of the Serbian Ministry of Internal Affairs and Chief of its Public Security Department and a fugitive from justice until his arrest in June 2007, had his trial commence at the Tribunal on 27 January 2009.

The Prosecution's indictment against Milutinović and his co-accused alleges that they participated in a joint criminal enterprise, the purpose of which was, among other things, to modify the ethnic balance in Kosovo to ensure continued Serb control over the territory. The accused, and other members of the enterprise, used the powers available to them as political and military leaders to achieve this purpose by criminal means consisting of a widespread or systematic campaign of terror and violence that included deportations, murders, forcible transfers and persecutions directed at the Kosovo Albanian population.

The prosecution alleges that throughout Kosovo, forces of Serbia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia systematically shelled towns and villages, burned homes and farms, damaged and destroyed Kosovo Albanian cultural and religious institutions, murdered Kosovo Albanian civilians and other persons taking no active part in the hostilities, and sexually assaulted Kosovo Albanian women.

The Trial began on 10 July 2006 and the Prosecution completed its case-in-chief on 1 May 2007 having called 113 witnesses. The Defence case commenced on 6 August 2007 and concluded on 16 May 2008, having called a total of 118 witnesses. The Chambers called two witnesses. Closing arguments were heard on 19 through 27 August 2008 at which the Prosecution asked for sentences to range from 20 years' to life imprisonment while the Defence for the acquittal of all six accused.

Since its establishment the Tribunal has indicted 161 persons for serious violations of humanitarian law committed on the territory of the former Yugoslavia between 1991 and 2001.

Proceedings against 116 have been concluded.

An information sheet providing a review of the case can be found at:
http://www.icty.org/x/cases/milutinovic/cis/en/cis_milutinovic_al_en.pdf

The indictment is available at:
<http://www.icty.org/x/cases/milutinovic/ind/en/milu-3aji060621e.pdf>

Courtroom proceedings can be followed on the Tribunal's website at www.icty.org

The reading of the Summary of the Judgement will be carried live.

International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia

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