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International
Criminal Tribunal
for the former
Yugoslavia

Tribunal Pénal
International pour
l'ex-Yougoslavie

PRESS RELEASE

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TRIAL CHAMBER

The Hague, 30 June 2006

OK/MOW/1094e

NASER ORIĆ CONVICTED

Tribunal judges today convicted Naser Orić, a former senior commander of Bosnian Muslim forces in and around Srebrenica, of failing to take steps to prevent the murder and cruel treatment of a number of Serb prisoners in the former UN 'safe area'. They sentenced Orić to two years' imprisonment.

In determining the sentence the Trial Chamber gave pivotal consideration to the general circumstances prevailing in Srebrenica and those particular to the accused and to the crimes committed. The judges described conditions in Srebrenica at the times of the crimes in 1992 and 1993 as abysmal. They noted that militarily superior Serb forces encircled the town and that there was an unmanageable influx of refugees there, as well as a critical shortage of food and the breakdown of law and order. The judges also noted that it was in these circumstances that Orić, then aged 25, was elected commander of a poorly trained volunteer force that lacked effective links with government forces in Sarajevo. His authority, they assessed, was scorned by some other Bosnian Muslim leaders and his situation became worse as the Bosnian Serb forces increased the momentum of their siege.

The judges found that there is no other case before the Tribunal in which the accused was found guilty of having failed to prevent murder and cruel treatment of prisoners in such a limited manner and in such abysmal personal and circumstantial conditions as in this case. Consequently, the sentence imposed reflects this uniquely limited criminal responsibility.

The Tribunal's Trial Chamber II convicted Orić because he had reason to know about acts of murder and cruel treatment committed at the Srebrenica Police Station and a building behind the Srebrenica municipal building where Serb prisoners were kept between 27 December 1992 and 20 March 1993, and he failed to take necessary and reasonable measures to prevent the occurrence of the crimes. The Trial Chamber acquitted the accused of a number of other alleged crimes.

The Trial Chamber, composed of Judge Carmel Agius (presiding), Judge Hans Henrik Brydensholt and Judge Albin Eser heard 82 witnesses. A total of 1649 exhibits were tendered into evidence.

The accused was entitled to credit for the period of time he spent in custody since 10 April 2003 and the Judges therefore ordered that he be released as soon as the necessary practical arrangements have been made.

*The full summary of the judgement as read out by Judge Agius can be found at:
<http://www.un.org/icty/pressreal/2006/p1094e-summary.htm>*

All proceedings can be followed on the Tribunal's website www.un.org/icty.

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

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