President Robinson travels to Serbia to launch a major legacy project

The President of the Tribunal, Judge Patrick Robinson, yesterday traveled to Belgrade, where he will today present a major project aimed at providing practical support to legal professionals in the former Yugoslavia handling war crimes cases.

This ambitious 18-month programme, entitled “War Crimes Justice Project”, is a joint initiative of the ICTY, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe’s Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR), the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI), and OSCE field operations in the region.

The project, which has been made possible by the support of the European Union, aims at facilitating the transfer of the Tribunal’s unique institutional knowledge and specialised skills to jurisdictions in the region of the former Yugoslavia, and at ensuring that those jurisdictions have access to the Tribunal’s relevant materials in a useable form.

The project forms part of the Tribunal’s ongoing efforts to cement its legacy across the region of the former Yugoslavia.

8 September
Italian Prize for Judge Pocar

Judge Fausto Pocar has been awarded the Prize for Dissemination, Promotion and Teaching of International Humanitarian Law for 2010 by the International Institute of Humanitarian Law in Sanremo. Judge Pocar received the prize at a ceremony in Sanremo, Italy. Among the past recipients of the prize, which was first awarded in 1980, are distinguished personalities and institutions such as the ICRC, the UNHCR, judges of the ICJ and professors of international humanitarian law.

10 September
Trial Chamber denies provisional release for Hardinaj and Brahimaj

Trial Chamber II denied the requests for provisional release of Ramush Haradinaj and Lahi Brahimaj out of concern for safety of witnesses.

With regard to Haradinaj, the Chamber accepted the Defence’s position that there was no risk of the accused personally intimidating witnesses. Yet, the Chamber found that witness intimidation remained prevalent in Kosovo recalling the unprecedented atmosphere of widespread and serious witness intimidation surrounding the original trial. The Chamber was mindful that a decision to grant Haradinaj provisional release would draw additional media attention to the proceedings, which would add to the already threatening atmosphere for witnesses. It found that the publicity following such a decision may encourage the accused’s supporters to engage in acts of intimidation.

With regard to Brahimaj, the Chamber was not satisfied that the accused, if released, would not pose a danger to victims, witnesses or other persons. The Chamber recalled the failure to secure the testimony of Shefqet Kabashi and another, protected, witness which resulted in a miscarriage of justice and the order for a partial retrial.

17 September
Prosecutor awarded Belgian prize

Prosecutor Serge Brammertz was this year’s recipient of the Grand Prize Condorcet Aron. The prize was awarded by the Centre d’étude et de recherche politique, a research centre based in Brussels. Prosecutor Brammertz received the prize together with Olivier De Schutter, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food. The prize is presented annually on 17 September to commemorate the birth of Nicolas de Condorcet and is awarded in recognition of “a long-standing commitment of a person or a foreign institution that has worked to disseminate humanistic values”.

21 September
Prosecutor on Mladić

Failure to arrest Ratko Mladić would be the “worst of signals” for international justice and “to those all out there”, Serge Brammertz said during a meeting with the Foreign Press Association. Continued freedom for Mladić “would mean you can sit out international justice over time,” the Prosecutor said, adding it would have an impact “broaden than the ICTY” and stressing that Mladić’s capture was a top priority for his office and vital for the stability of the Balkans.
Jelena Rašić was indicted in August 2010 but the indictment remained unsealed until her initial appearance. She is charged with five counts of contempt of court for bribing witnesses into making false statements during the trial of Milan Lukić and Sredoje Lukić.

One of the witnesses bribed was Zuhdija Tabaković, who was himself sentenced to three months imprisonment on 15 March 2010 after he had entered a guilty plea to six counts of contempt. Tabaković admitted that he had been approached by Milan Lukić’s “case manager”, Rašić, and asked to sign a pre-written statement even though he did not witness or have any knowledge of the events covered by the statement. Rašić gave Tabaković an envelope containing 1,000 euros and stated he would be paid more money once he testified. Rašić also presented Tabaković with two further pre-written statements and asked him to find two other men to sign them and testify. Tabaković found two men willing to sign and testify, and once their signatures were certified at the Novi Grad Municipality building, they were given envelopes containing money by an associate of Rašić.

Rašić is the third woman indicted by the ICTY, after Biljana Plavšić and Florence Hartmann.

The Appeals Chamber (Judge Meron, presiding. Judge Guney, Judge Pocar, Judge Liu, and Judge Vaz) issued a scheduling order for a review hearing in the case of Veselin Sljivancanin. The hearing, which will start at 2.30 p.m. and last the whole afternoon, is the first of its kind at the ICTY.

On 14 July 2010, the Appeals Chamber granted Sljivancanin’s application for review of the Appeals judgement against him of 5 May 2009. In the original appeals judgement, the Chamber entered an additional conviction for aiding and abetting murder and raised Sljivancanin’s sentence from 5 years to 17 years in prison.

COURTROOM SCHEDULE: 28 SEPTEMBER – 8 OCTOBER

Public proceedings are broadcast with a 30-minute delay on the ICTY’s website.

TUESDAY 28 SEPTEMBER
Courtroom I  09:00 – 13:45, Karadžić, Trial
14:15 – 19:00, Stanišić & Župljanin, Trial

Courtroom III  09:00 – 13:45, Tolimir, Trial

WEDNESDAY 29 SEPTEMBER
Courtroom I  09:00 – 13:45, Stanišić & Župljanin, Trial
14:15 – 19:00, Karadžić, Trial

Courtroom III  09:00 – 13:45, Tolimir, Trial
14:15 – 19:00, Stanišić & Simatović, Trial

THURSDAY 30 SEPTEMBER
Courtroom I  09:00 – 13:45, Karadžić, Trial
14:15 – 19:00, Stanišić & Župljanin, Trial

Courtroom III  09:00 – 13:45, Tolimir, Trial

FRIDAY 1 OCTOBER
Courtroom I  09:00 – 13:45, Stanišić & Župljanin, Trial

MONDAY 4 OCTOBER
Courtroom I  09:00 – 13:45, Perišić, Trial
14:15 – 19:00, Stanišić & Simatović, Trial

Courtroom III  09:00 – 13:45, Stanišić & Župljanin, Trial
14:15 – 19:00, Tolimir, Trial
Since the very first hearing (deferral request in the Tadić case) on 8 November 1994, the Tribunal has indicted a total of 161 individuals, and has already completed proceedings with regard to 124 of them: 12 have been acquitted, 63 sentenced (four are awaiting transfer, 25 have been transferred, 31 have served their term, and three died while serving their sentence), 13 have had their cases transferred to local courts. Another 36 cases have been terminated (either because indictments were withdrawn or because the accused died, before or after transfer to the Tribunal).

Proceedings are on-going with regard to 37 accused: 14 are at the appeals stage, 18 are currently on trial, and three are at the pre-retrial stage. Two fugitives are still at large.

A further 31 individuals have been or are the subject of contempt proceedings.