

Ahmici Cover Up Exposed

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A Croatian magazine has shed new light on the government's involvement in the Bosnian war.

Documents exposing Bosnian Croat involvement in the Ahmici massacre seven years ago have been published by the Croatian weekly magazine, *Globus*.

The documents and transcripts of conversations between the late President Franjo Tudjman and Croatian and Bosnian officials, also expose plans to annex areas of Bosnia.

All conversations in Tudjman's office were recorded and Croatian President Stipe Mesic has been pushing for the transcripts to be made public.

One hundred and sixteen Bosnian Muslims died at Ahmici on April 16, 1993. Most of those killed were civilians, many of them women and children.

The official Croatian version of events has always pointed the finger at British intelligence services and unknown Serbs. But a report by government investigators, published in *Globus*, clearly identifies the culprits as Bosnian Croat.

According to the magazine revelations, the then head of the Croatian Secret Service, HIS, Miroslav Tudjman, sent the report to his father, President Tudjman, who had ordered the investigation.

Two agents were assigned to the case but both were killed shortly after completing their report. Ivica Rajic, a leader of the Croatian Defence Council, HVO, in Bosnia, and one of those implicated in the report, was tried for the double murder in Mostar, but later released following the intervention of the late Croatian Defence Minister, Gojko Susak, and Mladen Naletelic Tuta, recently handed over to The Hague by the Croatian government.

After receiving the Ahmici report, the Croatian government is said to have issued false identity papers to several HVO officers suspected of participating in the killings, including Pasko Ljubicic, Ante Sliskovic, Miroslav Brale Cicak, Vlada Cosic and Vlada Kojic and, allegedly, Rajic.

Ljubicic was commander of the military police unit believed responsible for the massacre. Sliskovic was head of the Central Bosnia secret service.

Evidence that senior figures in the Tudjman administration and the Croatian secret service failed to hand over known suspects to The Hague and, in fact, went to considerable lengths to protect those individuals could result in fresh accusations from the Tribunal. Miroslav Tudjman, who was only removed from his position as head of the HIS in January following the electoral defeat of the Croatian Democratic Union, HDZ, seems particularly exposed.

The revelations coincided with an impromptu visit to Zagreb last week by The Hague Tribunal's chief prosecutor, Carla del Ponte, raising speculation that the two events are linked. Officials at The Hague, however, described the visit as a "routine follow-up."

Del Ponte met Croatian Prime Minister, Ivica Racan, Deputy Prime Minister Goran Granic and Justice Minister Stjepan Ivanisevic. Although noting that increased co-operation between The Hague and Zagreb was going well, Del Ponte criticised the Croatian media for publishing the Ahmici information, arguing that such revelations could tip off suspects in on-going investigations.

On Croatian Nation Day, May 30, President Mesic reiterated the new government's determination to improve co-operation with The Hague. "There must be a clear distinction between politics and crime, legitimate defence and ethnic cleansing," Mesic said.

Racan's government has already handed over one prominent war crimes suspect and delivered plane loads of documents relating to Croatian army's offensives which reclaimed Serb-held territory five years ago.

In February, General Tihomir Blaskic, former HVO commander in Bosnia, was convicted of war crimes at The Hague and sentenced to 45 years imprisonment. The severity of the sentence was largely due to the Ahmici atrocities. The sentence provoked mass demonstrations in Zagreb, headed by radicals in the HDZ, clearly challenging Racan's policy of co-operation with Tribunal

Racan said at the time, however, that documents relevant to the Ahmici killings had been found, which identified the true perpetrators. Had the previous government made those papers available to the Tribunal, Racan said, Blaskic would probably not have received such a harsh sentence.

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Location: [Bosnia and Herzegovina](#)

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