

Ban Ki-moon Urges Top Fugitives to Surrender

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By Merdijana Sadovic (TU No 487, 02-Feb-07)

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon visited the tribunal this week as part of his brief tour of international judicial institutions based in The Hague.

On February 1, the secretary-general met the tribunal's president Fausto Pocar, and the chief prosecutor Carla Del Ponte, along with a number of ICTY judges. He also briefly addressed tribunal staff.

During his meeting with President Pocar, the tribunal's completion strategy was discussed, as well as increasing efforts on the part of the judges to conclude trials as expeditiously as possible.

The tribunal is due to close its doors in 2010, and all first-instance trials have to be finished by 2008.

The issue of war crimes fugitives was also raised - their impact on the completion of the court's work and the action which should be taken if they are not arrested in the near future.

Del Ponte said that it is imperative for the remaining fugitives, especially top war crimes suspects Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladić, to be transferred to the tribunal without delay so that the tribunal can successfully fulfill its mandate.

It has not yet been decided whether the court's mandate should be extended if Karadzic and Mladic are eventually captured, or whether they should be tried elsewhere.

In a short address to the media, the secretary-general praised the tribunal's work to date, adding it is "crucially important for international peace and security that the rule of law principle is firmly established and that an end to impunity to war criminals is brought".

He also urged Karadžić and Mladić to surrender, because this would be "for the interest and the benefit of themselves, as well as for the benefit of international peace and security".

Merdijana Sadovic is IWPR's Hague project manager.

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