

## **Brdjanin And Kolundzija Initial Appearances**

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Brdjanin, a member of the Parliament of Republika Srpska and a former Minister in the government of the Serbian entity, faces one count of crimes against humanity, for persecution of Bosnian Muslims and Bosnian Croats on political, racial or religious grounds.

At the time when the offences were committed, 1992, Brdjanin was the president of the Crisis Staff of Serbian Autonomous Region Krajina, in the north-western part of Bosnia-Herzegovina, from where over 100,000 Muslims and Croats were ethnically cleansed during the war.

It would not be surprising, after the Appeals Chamber Judgement in the Tadic case, if the prosecutor decided to add charges of grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions to Brdjanin's charge sheet, since that judgement established that the victims of the persecution were "protected persons" under the Geneva Conventions.

Tadic's crimes were committed in the Prijedor region, home to the infamous Omarska, Keraterm and Trnopolje camps, all of which were under the responsibility of Brdjanin as president of the Crisis Staff, which covered the area.

Dragan Kolundzija, a former shift commander at the Keraterm Camp, was active in the same area. Last week he appeared before the judges for the third time, after he had used on two previous occasions the misspelling of his name and wrong date and place of birth in the indictment, to persuade the judges that the wrong person was in front of them.

In his third appearance Kolundzija finally pleaded not guilty to all 13 counts of crimes against humanity, grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions and violations of the laws or customs of war. He sat with his eyes downcast as the charges were read out and answered simply: "Not guilty" to each.

Defence lawyer Dusan Vucicevic said his client had performed only kind deeds to Keraterm inmates and dismissed the prosecution's case as lacking essential detail. "If ever there was a Good Samaritan before the court, then it is the gentleman sitting here," he said, pointing at Kolundzija.

Four more Bosnian Serbs besides Brdjanin and Kolundzija - Miroslav Kvočka, Mladen Radic, Milošica Kos and Zoran Zigic - are also awaiting the beginning of trial for crimes in the camps at Omarska and Keraterm. It is expected that after the preliminary phase of the proceedings the Trial Chamber will eventually opt for a joint trial for Kolundzija and the other four, accused of the same crimes in the same region and camps.

**Location:** [Bosnia and Herzegovina](#)

**Focus:** [International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia](#)

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