

Briefly Noted...

Author: [IWPR](#)

By Chris Stephen in The Hague (TU 304, 10-14 March 2003)

The new president of The Hague tribunal, Judge Theodor Meron, expressed his sorrow at the assassination of Serbian prime minister Zoran Djindjic this week.

“His death is a heavy blow to individual accountability for violations of international humanitarian law and to the rule of law,” said a statement from Judge Meron’s office.

The judge is newly installed after the previous president, Claude Jorda, resigned in order to take up his post as one of the 18 judges inaugurated last week at the International Criminal Court.

ZAGREB INDICTS CROATS FOR CRIMES AGAINST SERBS

A court in the eastern Croatian town of Osijek has indicted two men for the slaying of 19 ethnic Serbs in 1991.

Former soldiers Nikola Ivankovic and Enes Viteskic were indicted for killing the Serbs in December 1991 near the village of Paulin Dvor.

The indictment comes as a growing number of war crimes cases are prosecuted by courts in the Balkans. The tribunal hopes that all such trials will eventually be handled by courts in the Balkans.

DEL PONTE FOR ICC?

The list of candidates for the job of ICC chief prosecutor is a closely guarded secret, with sources saying only that candidates from Argentina and Australia are being considered.

But one name increasingly being talked about is Carla Del Ponte – currently chief prosecutor at that other Hague tribunal, the ICTY.

Officials in her native Switzerland are said to be backing her – as are all those who say she is one of the few people in the world to have both the experience and the grit to take on such a tough post.

But would Del Ponte herself want the job?

Certainly the ICC could prove more frustrating than the ICTY.

The new court has one quarter of the budget, plus the active opposition of the United States, the country, more than any other, which has made the existing ICTY work.

One thing is certain: if Del Ponte decides she wants it, she can expect support from many in the human rights movement, and all those who want a prosecutor who does not bend to political pressure and will indict suspects large or small.

ARKAN'S ARMOURY EXPOSED

An assassin's bullet cheated the world of seeing Arkan – real name Zejlko Raznatovic – appear at The Hague, but this week we finally got a look at his weapons collection.

As part of operations to round-up Djindjic murder suspects, Serbian police raided his Belgrade home, arresting his wife, popular folk singer Ceca.

She has lived there since her husband was shot dead in Belgrade's Intercontinental Hotel in January 2000.

Now Ceca, famous for her warbling voice and pneumatic chest, is explaining to police why she was hoarding 21 pistols, five thousand rounds of ammunition, a laser rangefinder, a sniper scope, police batons, rifle silencers, night sights and a pair of handcuffs. All were presumably for her own personal use.

IRAQ INVASION

For many war crimes officials in The Hague, the most interesting thing about the debate over the legality of the coming war in Iraq is that the argument is pointless.

It matters little whether the US invasion is lawful under UN law – because there is no enforcement mechanism.

The worst that could happen is that Iraq takes the US to the International Court of Justice – a process that would take years and end, at worst, in a fine.

And as most Iraqis will be pleased to see Saddam ousted, it is unlikely they will want to take the US to court.

Chris Stephen is IWPR's bureau chief in The Hague.

Location: Balkans
Macedonia
Albania
Serbia

Focus: International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia

Source URL: <https://iwpr.net/global-voices/briefly-noted-31>