

Briefly Noted

Author: [IWPR](#)

Compiled by IWPR staff in The Hague (TU No 396, 04-Mar-05)

At a March 2 hearing, Milan Gvero pleaded not guilty to all five counts on the indictment against him. Radivoje Miletic – who arrived in The Hague at the start of the week – postponed entering a plea, explaining that he didn't understand his indictment.

The two are jointly charged – along with former assistant to the commander for security in the Bosnian Serb army, VRS, general staff Zdravko Tolimir – with involvement in the massacre of up to 8,000 Bosnian Muslims near the town of Srebrenica in 1995.

All three were close associates of the Bosnian Serb wartime commander Ratko Mladic, who has been on the run since he was indicted on genocide charges almost ten years ago.

They are also charged with driving Bosnian Muslims from Zepa.

Former VRS assistant commander for morale, legal and religious affairs Gvero told judges this week that during the war in Bosnia he “didn't kill a sparrow, let alone a person”.

He insisted that the indictment against him contained “a lot of nonsense” and said he wasn't in a position to issue any orders during the war, because he didn't have any units subordinated to him.

Gvero added that he “never fought against any ethnic groups” but against “ideologies that pushed those groups into the war”.

“My conscience is clean, and I will prove my innocence in this court,” he concluded.

Former VRS deputy chief of staff Miletic used his first appearance before the tribunal to insist proudly that no one forced him to come to The Hague and that he had made the decision to face the court of his own accord.

“An honorable general never ‘surrenders’ – I came here voluntarily,” he said.

Miletic has another 30 days to enter a plea.

Former commander in chief of the Bosnian army General Rasim Delic arrived in The Hague this week to plead not guilty to all four charges in the indictment against him.

Prosecutors say Delic is responsible for crimes allegedly committed by foreign mujahedin fighters in central Bosnia between 1993 and 1995, including the murder and torture of Bosnian Serbs and Croats and the rape of female prisoners.

He is accused of failing to prevent such crimes or to punish the perpetrators afterwards.

Dressed in a dark suit, Delic, 56, appeared calm and good-humoured at his initial appearance before the UN court on March 3.

He is the highest-ranking Bosnian Muslim officer to be called before the tribunal to date and his indictment has caused a stir in Sarajevo, where he has a reputation as a professional soldier who fulfilled his wartime role well.

Judges have yet have to decide whether Delic will be granted provisional release pending the start of his trial.

Location: Bosnia and Herzegovina

Source URL: <https://iwpr.net/global-voices/briefly-noted-5>