

## **Briefly Noted**

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By Emir Suljagic in The Hague (TU 316, 02-06 June 2003)

The former chief of Slobodan Milosevic's secret service, Jovica Stanisic, arrived in The Hague on June 11 and was taken to the tribunal's detention facility.

Arrested by Belgrade police in connection to the March 12 assassination of Serbian prime minister Zoran Djindjic, Stanisic was subsequently charged with crimes against humanity and war crimes by the tribunal.

He and his underling, Franko Simatovic, are both accused of sending thousands of volunteers from Serbia during the wars in Bosnia and Croatia.

Simatovic arrived earlier this month, but Stanisic's extradition was delayed by colon surgery.

While in prison in Belgrade, Stanisic's mother also died and police turned down his request to attend her funeral.

Charged with crimes Serbian paramilitary units allegedly committed in Vukovar, eastern Slavonija, Bijeljina, Bosanski Samac, Doboj, Zvornik, Mrkonjic Grad and Sanski, Stanisic is thought to have been one of the most trusted associates of Slobodan Milosevic.

He fell out with Milosevic in 1998 over the regime's harsh and repressive policy against Kosovo Albanians. If he were to agree to a plea bargain, his testimony could prove invaluable to the Milosevic prosecution team.

### EXTRADITION OF BOSNIAN CROAT CHIEF EXPECTED

The final obstacle to extraditing Ivica Rajic to The Hague was cleared this week after a Croatian court ruled that the former Bosnian Croat commander should be transferred to the tribunal.

The court turned down Rajic's appeal demanding to be tried in Croatia on July 9, forcing him to appear before the tribunal like a dozen other Bosnian Croats charged with atrocities in central Bosnia.

Rajic, who has been in hiding since 1996, is charged with crimes against humanity. The indictment alleges that troops under his command massacred the Bosnian Muslim population of the village of Stupni Do in 1993.

He avoided arrest by hiding mostly in Croatia with the help of Franjo Tudjman's loyalists in the secret services.

He was eventually arrested in Split, a popular tourist destination on the Adriatic coast, where he reportedly lived openly for several years.

## GOTOVINA READY TO "TALK" TO HAGUE

Fugitive former Croatian general Ante Gotovina said this week that he would be willing to talk to Hague investigators.

His remarks were made in an interview with the Zagreb-based weekly magazine Nacional published on July 10, two days after NATO troops in Bosnia arrested two Bosnian Croats, thinking that one of them might be Gotovina.

In the interview - conducted at a secret location - the general, who disappeared the day before he was indicted by the tribunal in July 2001, blamed the former government for not giving him an opportunity to talk to the investigators two years ago.

He is charged with eight counts of violations of laws or customs of war and for use of artillery against civilian targets during a Croatian army operation in August 1995.

Two days after the interview was published, Stjepan Mesic, the president of Croatia, called on Hague prosecutors to reconsider the indictment, based on new facts revealed by Gotovina himself.

The prosecution agreed to talk to him - in The Hague.

## CROAT SOLDIERS TRIED FOR MURDER

Two Croats charged with the murder of 19 Serb civilians went on trial this week at an Osijek court.

Nikola Ivankovic and Enes Viteskic, both members of Croatian armed forces, are accused of attacking a house in Paulin Dvor where the Serbs were hiding, spraying it with automatic gunfire and tossing hand-grenades inside it.

The bodies of the 19 Serbs were found several years later in Gospic, a town 400 kilometres from Paulin Dvor, where it is alleged they have been transported by Croatian army in an attempt to conceal the murders.

Emir Suljagic is an IWPR reporter in The Hague.

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