

COURTSIDE: Bosanska Krajina Trial

French defence lawyers rapped for poor attendance record

Punitive measures may be taken against the French defence counsels of General Momir Talic, charged with genocide in the Bosnian Krajina, and Radoslav Brdjanin, former president of the crisis headquarters in Banja Luka, for irregular appearance in court.

Out of 13 working days in the trial, Talic's lawyer Xavier de Roux attended only six hearings. His aide Michel Pitron appeared twice. In their absence, an assistant presented the defence's interests. As a result, the prosecution warned that the accused might later claim he was inadequately defended and request an annulment of the sentence.

Maltese Judge Carmel Agius warned he would "not allow any games" and threatened to punish Talic's lawyers. If found in contempt of court, they could face financial penalties, replacement or even prison sentences.

Such a situation arose in the case of General Stanislav Galic, whose US lawyer Nikola Kostic was reprimanded for "inadequate and inefficient defence" and replaced.

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