

## **COURTSIDE: Omarska Camp - Survival Philosophy**

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A prosecution witness reveals how he bribed camp guards to ensure he survived.

The 15-month-long trial of four men accused of war crimes in the Prijedor camps in Bosnia and Herzegovina is moving towards its final stages, with protracted clashes between prosecution and defence.

The prosecution has been attacking evidence presented by counsel for the three defendants, Miroslav Kvocka, Dragoljub Prcac and Zoran Zigic, charged with alleged atrocities in the Omarska, Keraterm and Trnopolje camps.

Kvocka and Prcac were both deputy camp commanders according to the indictment, while Zigic was a guard.

In earlier hearings, the defence counsel for Kvocka argued that his client had helped detained Bosniaks (Muslims) in Prijedor and, as a result, was branded a traitor and even threatened. Kvocka said, among other things, that he had helped a Muslim acquaintance recover hidden family valuables.

Last week, that acquaintance appeared for the prosecution as "Witness AW" and said Kvocka together with Momcilo Gruban (also accused of the crimes in Omarska, but still at large) forced him and his sister at gunpoint to unearth their money and gold and hand it over.

The prosecution had a similar story about Dragoljub Prcac, who also claimed to have helped prisoners. A former detainee in Omarska, Mirsad Kugic, described how one night, several days after he came to the camp, Prcac summoned him to an office, where he was told his family would be released if he handed over money.

Kugic, one of the wealthiest inhabitants of Prijedor before the war, said he had no cash because he had invested everything in a new restaurant. He offered to transfer to Prcac all his property, which included restaurants and slaughter houses. But Prcac told Kugic that unless he handed over money he would "end up like everyone else".

Several days later, Prcac led out Kugic again, accusing him of giving money to the guards. The witness explained in court that this was part of his "philosophy for camp survival": bribing less important guards not to beat him. He claims more senior guards killed all those who attempted similar bribes.

Since Zigic's defence have argued that Zigic's drunkenness influenced his actions, the prosecution called the German forensic psychiatrist Dr Norbert Nedopil who has examined a number of tribunal defendants. Nedopil said alcohol played no big role in Zigic's behaviour. He said the defendant could not control himself under stress.

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

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