

## **COURTSIDE: Tuta & Stela Trial**

Prosecution says Naletilic set an atrocious example to his troops

The prosecution last week continued its evidence against Mladen Naletilic "Tuta", former commander of the Convicts Battalion of the Bosnian Croat forces, the HVO, claiming he personally beat Bosniak detainees in his custody. A witness said, Naletilic who is accused of crimes against Bosniaks in the Mostar region of south-west Bosnia in 1993, beat soldiers captured after the fall of Sovici, a village north of Mostar, in the summer 1993.

In testimony made via video-link from the United States, the witness said he was captured in another area with a group of Bosniak soldiers after they abandoned the defence lines round Sovici following the HVO's capture of the village.

"Soldiers started to beat us. Tuta was standing by and watching," he said. "I was ordered to crawl on all four and pretend I was picking imaginary grapes so they could reach my stomach when kicking me. While doing that I saw Tuta hitting another detainee with a gun and asking him what was our connection with [Bosnian army forces in] Jablanica."

The witness said that after the beating, Tuta threatened two captured soldiers with execution, though this was countermanded by another soldier, named Blaz.

The prosecution charges Tuta with seriously mistreating detained civilians and prisoners of war, emphasising that instead of preventing and punishing his troops' criminal actions, he set an atrocious example by personally taking part in beatings.

Vjera Bogati is an IWPR special correspondent at The Hague and a journalist with SENSE News Agency.

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

**Focus:** [International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia](#)

---

**Source URL:** <https://iwpr.net/global-voices/courtside-tuta-stela-trial-2>