

Croatians Condemn Slijivancanin Claims

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By Katherine Boyle in The Hague (TU No 475, 3-Nov-06)

According to the indictment against the former JNA officer, who is currently on trial in The Hague, those selected at the hospital were later executed near Ovcarica farm by local Serb troops in November 1991.

In his testimony this week, Slijivancanin implied that hospital staff were responsible for the selection of the murdered detainees, and denied previous witnesses claims that he himself had a list of suspected Croatian fighters and had chosen who would be detained.

Croatian prime minister Ivo Sanader called the statement “stupid” and described Slijivancanin’s effort to assign blame to the hospital staff as a “cheap trick”.

He said that several doctors who were in the Vukovar hospital are witnesses for the prosecution, and that Slijivancanin was trying to “smear” their reputation.

Croatian president Stjepan Mesic also said Slijivancanin was trying to deny his own responsibility for the slaughter at Ovcarica, but noted that it was unlikely that the tribunal would believe Slijivancanin’s claims.

“He, who is to blame, and whose soldiers killed wounded people, killed our men at the hospital, cannot ask for any excuses,” Mesic told the Croatian media.

Slijivancanin and former JNA officers Mile Mrksic and Miroslav Radic are charged with having command responsibility over the soldiers alleged to have killed the people taken from the hospital.

The prosecution completed its cross-examination of Slijivancanin this week.

Katherine Boyle is an IWPR reporter in The Hague.

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