

## **Date Set for Aleksovski Trial**

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Tribunal Update 56: Last Week in The Hague (December 7-11, 1997)

January 19 has been set as a tentative date for the start of the trial of Slavko Dokmanovic.

Despite the prosecution's wish to have one trial for one indictment, the six accused in the original Lasva Valley indictment, issued on November 10, 1995, could have as many as three trials. The reason is the time that passed between their respective arrivals at The Hague. The first to surrender, in April 1996, was Blaskic; in May 1997 the Croatian authorities extradited Zlatko Aleksovski, while the rest - Dario Kordic, Ivan Santic, Mario Cerkez and Pero Skopljak - arrived at The Hague on October 6 in the "package" of 10 Croats who "gave themselves up".

In the meantime, on September 25 the Trial Chamber granted a defence request for the accused Aleksovski to be tried separately from his co-accused. A request from the prosecution that Aleksovski be tried together with the others was expected, but in the event none was made and the opening of the trial was scheduled.

In his initial appearance before the Trial Chamber on April 29, 1997, Aleksovski pleaded not guilty to all the charges against him (see Update 26). According to the indictment, Aleksovski (born in Pakrac in Croatia), became commander of the Kaonik detention centre in Central Bosnia in January 1993.

In May 1993, he became head of the district HVO "Heliodrom" prison in Mostar. The indictment alleges that "many of the detainees under his control were subjected to inhumane treatment, including, but not limited to, excessive and cruel interrogation, physical and psychological harm, forced labour (digging trenches) in hazardous circumstances, being used as human shields and some were murdered or otherwise killed."

Aleksovski has told the Trial Chamber that he considers himself to be "absolutely innocent" of all these charges, which the Lasva Valley indictment qualifies as grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions and a violation of the laws and customs of war.

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