

## **Experts Discuss Future of ICTY and ICTR Archives**

**Author:** [Merdijana Sadović](#)

Their work seen as crucial for legacy of the tribunals, victims and future of international criminal justice. Legal experts gathered in The Hague this week to discuss the future of the archives of both the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, ICTY, and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, ICTR.

The expert committee - chaired by former ICTY and ICTR prosecutor, Justice Richard Goldstone - is undertaking a study which should provide the two tribunals with an independent analysis of how best to ensure future accessibility of the archives.

They will also review different locations that may be appropriate for housing the tens of thousands of documents.

The experts will, among other things, discuss the establishment of a single joint archive, two separate archives or multiple archives and will recommend the best option.

“The work of the independent committee is crucial for the preservation of the legacy of the two tribunals and for the victims, as well as for the future for international criminal justice,” said Justice Goldstone, in a press release this week.

Both tribunals are due to complete their mission in the coming years and are working to put in place a clear system that will best serve the interests of people in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, as well as the international community.

Numerous important elements regarding the tribunals' immensely important archives will be assessed in this study, which will decide how their security, accessibility and preservation can be protected.

According to the committee's statement, these archives contain a vast number of records. For example, the Office of the Prosecutor, OTP, possesses several million pages of evidence, and the Registries Court Management Support Sections hold tens of thousands of hours of videotaped courtroom proceedings.

“The tribunals' archives are a unique and invaluable resource for the peoples of Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, the United Nations and the international community. The many benefits of and uses for the archives include their role to facilitate ongoing and future prosecutions, serve as a historic record, as well as contribute to peace and reconciliation in the regions,” read the statement.

The expert team is due to submit an interim report to the tribunals' registrars during the first quarter of 2008. Before that, members of the team will be visiting all regions involved to consult governments and civil society on this issue and will also meet with relevant international NGOs.

This study is being undertaken by a team of internationally recognised experts in the archives and legal professions. The team dealing specifically with the ICTY archive is composed of Professor Dr Eric Ketelaar,

a former national archivist of The Netherlands, and Cecile Aptel, a former staff member of both the ICTY and ICTR.

The ICTR-related team is made up of Professor Dr Saliou Mbaye, former national archivist of Senegal and Judge M Chande Othman, judge at the Tanzanian High Court, former prosecutor at the East Timor UN administration, and former chief prosecutor at the ICTR.

Merdijana Sadovic is an IWPR's Hague project manager.

**Location:** Balkans

**Focus:** International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia

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