

Extra Judges to Meet Heavy Workload

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Tribunal shortly able to hear up to eight cases simultaneously - highest number since its established. The United Nations Security Council this week approved the appointment of four additional temporary judges at the Hague tribunal.

Secretary General Ban Ki Moon was authorised to assign the judges to help the court meet its target of trying all accused by the end of 2008.

The resolution stated that the extra judges would help "to conduct additional trials as soon as possible in order to meet completion strategy objectives".

The tribunal currently employs 16 permanent judges elected by the UN General Assembly as well as an additional 12 temporary judges. The new appointments, themselves a temporary measure, will take the total number of extra judges to 16. But from the beginning of 2009 this number must return to a maximum of 12.

"With the approval of this resolution, the tribunal will be able to increase its level of productivity, hearing up to eight cases simultaneously, the highest number since its establishment," the tribunal said in a statement.

The completion strategy of the tribunal dictates that all trials be completed by the end of this year, with all appeals procedures tied up before the court's scheduled closure in 2010.

However, an exact timeframe remains in the balance as the two men most wanted in the Hague remain at large. Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic and his military commander Ratko Mladic are both charged by the tribunal with orchestrating the 1995 genocide in Srebrenica which led to the death of 8,000 Muslim men and boys.

While some trials are also being relocated to regional courts in the Balkans, cases scheduled to be heard in The Hague, such as that of former Croatian general Ante Gotovina, have yet to start.

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