

Foca Indictment: Arrest Of Zoran Vukovic

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The reason for Robertson's caution, Risley said, "was the fact that he was not aware that we knew the identity that (Vukovic) uses now". But prosecutors and investigators were aware he used multiple aliases and had led him to believe they were going after someone else.

Zoran Vukovic was born on September 6 1955. According to the 'Foca Indictment', issued in June 1996, he was involved in the attack on Foca and its surrounding villages and in the arrest of civilians, as one of the sub-commanders of the paramilitary police and a paramilitary leader.

The first of the indictment's co-accused, local police chief Dragan Gagovic, was killed in January this year during an attempted arrest by French SFOR troops. (See Tribunal Update No. 107).

According to the indictment, the municipality of Foca was taken over by the Bosnian Serb Army, assisted by paramilitary units, including some from Serbia and Montenegro, between April and July 1992. The soldiers separated men from women. The men were mostly detained in the Foca Kazneno-Popravni dom, one of the largest prison facilities in the former Yugoslavia.

Muslim women, children and elderly persons were detained in houses, apartments and motels in the town of Foca or surrounding villages, and in short and long-term detention centres, such as Buk Bijela, Foca High School and the Partizan Sports Hall.

Additionally, several women were held in houses and apartments, which were used as brothels by groups of mainly paramilitary soldiers. Many of the detained women, some as young as 12 years of age, "were subjected to humiliating and degrading conditions of life, to brutal beatings and sexual assaults, including rapes".

The original Foca indictment cites torture and rape of several detainees and charges Vukovic with four counts of crimes against humanity and two counts of violation of the laws or customs of war and grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions.

A subsequent revision filed under seal by the prosecutor on October 7 1999 replaced the charges with four counts of violations of the laws or customs of war and four counts of crimes against humanity, all in relation to torture and rape in Foca, it was announced Friday.

Of the seven accused on the Foca Indictment two others are now in the Tribunal's custody - Dragoljub Kunarac, who surrendered on March 4 1998 and Radomir Kovac, arrested by SFOR on August 2 1999) whose trial should start in mid-March next year.

It has not been ruled out that this trial's opening could be postponed to allow time for Vukovic's charges to be heard in the same sittings.

The Bosnian Serb authorities claimed after Vukovic's arrest that he was not the man sought by the Tribunal. SFOR has made such mistakes before, in July 1998, when twins Miroslav and Milan Vuckovic were

arrested instead of Predrag and Nenad Banovic, accused of crimes in the Keraterm camp.

The Tribunal's investigators, however, quickly established that a mistake had been made and the Vukovic brothers were released the same day and returned to Bosnia on a special NATO plane.

The detention of Zoran Vukovic brings to 34 the number of accused in the Tribunal's custody. Thirty-one other indicted individuals remain provisionally at large.

Location: Balkans
Serbia
Bosnia and
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Focus: International Criminal Tribunal for the former
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