

Haradinaj Defence Not Ready for Start of Trial

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In a status conference held this week, presiding judge Carmel Agius confirmed that the trial could begin in November 2006 or early 2007. However, the defence argued that the prosecution's failure to disclose exculpatory material – documents or statements that might help prove the innocence of the accused – at the agreed time had delayed their work on the case. This meant that they were effectively being “denied” the opportunity to prepare a proper defence, the lawyers said.

Haradinaj, Balaj and Brahimaj are charged with crimes against humanity and violations of the laws or customs of war for their alleged involvement in the murder and mistreatment of Kosovo Serbs, Roma and Albanians in 1998.

At the time the crimes were committed, Haradinaj was commander of the “Dukagjin” operational zone for the Kosovo Liberation Army, KLA. Balaj led a special KLA unit known as the Black Eagles, and Brahimaj was commander of the Dukagjin operational staff.

When asked to respond to the defence's allegations, the prosecution assured the chamber that the all the relevant documents would be handed over to lawyers representing the three accused by May. They added that the delays in disclosure had been caused by changes in the composition of the prosecution team.

The next status conference has been scheduled for March 30.

Location: [Kosovo](#)

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