

Haradinaj Won't Present Defence Case in Retrial

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Closing arguments date requested for end of June.

Former Kosovo prime minister Ramush Haradinaj will not present a defence case in his partial retrial, his lawyers said this week.

They also requested that closing arguments in the case be held on June 25 and 26.

In 2008, Haradinaj, a former commander in the Kosovo Liberation Army, KLA, was acquitted of all 37 counts against him, which included the murder and torture of Serb civilians as well as of suspected Albanian and Roma collaborators during the late nineties conflict in Kosovo.

One of his co-accused, Idriz Balaj, was acquitted, while the other, Lahi Brahimaj, was found guilty of cruel treatment and torture and sentenced to six years in prison.

The current partial retrial stems from a July 2010 appeals judgment which found that trial judges “failed to appreciate the gravity of the threat that witness intimidation posed to the trial’s integrity” and that they placed too much emphasis “on ensuring that the prosecution took no more than its pre-allotted time... irrespective of the possibility of securing potentially important testimony”.

Appeals judges ruled that Haradinaj and Balaj should be retried on six counts of murder, cruel treatment and torture, and Brahimaj retried on four of those counts.

The partial retrial began last August but dragged on for several months due to difficulties securing the testimony of the last key witness, known only as Witness 80.

At a status conference in February, the defence strenuously objected to Witness 80 testifying via video link from the unnamed country in which he now lives, and demanded that the court travel to hear the witness’s evidence if he was unable to come to The Hague himself. (For more, see **Key Witness Absent From Haradinaj Trial**)

The decision on this request has remained confidential, but a motion filed this week stated that on April 20, “the last witness in the prosecution’s case completed his testimony and the prosecution rested its case”.

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Topic: [International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia](#)

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