

## **Keraterm Case - Trial to begin on March 19**

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According to the indictment, over 3,000 Bosniaks (Bosnian Muslims) and Croats were held at Keraterm, a ceramic tiles factory complex, after the Bosnian Serb take-over of municipal power in the Prijedor area.

Dusko Sikirica, the alleged camp commander, Damir Dosen and Dragan Kolundzija, claimed to have been guard shift commanders, are the principal defendants.

Four others named in the indictment are still at large.

The trial had been scheduled to start in November 2000 but was postponed following the arrest of Sikirica in June to allow the prosecution time to prepare their case against him. He is one of the nine tribunal indictees charged with genocide.

Given Sikirica's alleged position as camp commander, the prosecution argued the volume of material needed to prove their case had increased.

According to the indictment, he committed genocide by "killing Bosnian Muslims and Croats, causing serious bodily or mental harm and deliberately inflicting on them conditions of life calculated to bring about the physical destruction of a part of their population".

All of this was done "with the intent to destroy Bosnian Muslims and Croats, in part, as national, ethnic or religious groups".

One of the most serious crimes at Keraterm was the so-called "Room 3" massacre of men from the Brdo area in July 1992.

On July 24, 1992, the indictment claims over 140 men were killed and about 50 wounded when guards at the camp opened fire with automatic rifles. The shooting allegedly went on for some hours. Kolundzija was guard shift commander that evening, the indictment claims.

Several former Keraterm detainees gave evidence about the massacre during the trial of Miroslav Kvočka and others, accused of crimes at another Prijedor camp in Omarska.

The witnesses said they saw Zoran Zigic, Kvočka's co-defendant, at the Keraterm camp on the eve of and just after the massacre. (See Tribunal Update No. 184).

Evidence from former detainees will make up the bulk of the prosecution's case. At a pre-trial hearing last week, the judges asked prosecutors to limit their case to about nine weeks. Defence lawyers for the three accused will receive the same amount of time. Judge Richard May said he expected the main part of the hearing to end by August 2001.

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

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