

## **Perisic Trial Start Date Uncertain**

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Ex-Yugoslav army commander's trial will only begin next month if judges' contracts are extended. The trial of former Yugoslav army chief Momcilo Perisic could be delayed if the United Nations Security Council fails to confirm the mandate of temporary judges set to hear the case.

At a pre-trial conference on September 24, presiding judge Bakone Moloto – who is likely to preside over the trial which is due to start on October 1 – said the trial had not yet been allocated to a trial chamber.

There are several ad-litem, or temporary judges, currently working at the Hague tribunal and some of them are expected to join the trial chamber conducting Perisic's trial. However, none of them has a term of office extending beyond September 2009.

As Perisic's trial will not be completed by then, their mandate must be extended before the trial starts, explained Judge Moloto at the hearing.

"We don't know when the trial chamber will finally be assembled," said Judge Moloto, adding that the matter was in the hands of the Security Council, and "beyond the power and control of the tribunal".

The indictment says that during the Balkans conflicts, Perisic – one of the highest-ranking Serbs to face justice at the Hague tribunal – provided military assistance to Bosnian Serb and Croatian Serb separatist forces.

According to the allegations, he gave the troops arms, personnel, equipment and funding.

Many in the region hope that during the trial, a link will be established between the Serbian authorities and those forces who committed atrocities during the Bosnian conflict, such as the siege of Sarajevo and the genocide in Srebrenica.

Prosecutors hoped to prove Belgrade's involvement in the conflict during the trial of Slobodan Milosevic, the ex-president of Yugoslavia and Serbia, which was cut short by his death in March 2006.

Perisic, who voluntarily surrendered in March 2005, has pleaded not guilty to the 13 counts against him.

The accused told Judge Moloto this week that his health was fairly good and that he had no complaints about conditions in the detention unit. He had been living in Belgrade until last week, after being granted provisional release in June 2005.

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**Location:** [Balkans](#)  
[Macedonia](#)

Albania  
Serbia

**Topic:** Briefly Noted

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