

## **'Plavsic Case': Prosecutor Makes An Exception**

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Contrary to the prosecutor's policy of "refrain[ing] from making public comments about the existence or otherwise of non-public indictments," Deputy Prosecutor Graham Blewitt last week made "the clearest possible statement that Biljana Plavsic has never been indicted by this Tribunal nor has any warrant of arrest ever been issued by this Tribunal for her arrest." To make it even clearer, this sentence was underlined in the statement issued by the Office of the Prosecutor on 13 May 1998.

The prosecution made this exception to its standard policy to counter the persistent insinuations in the Austrian, Bosnian, and Croatian press that the president of Republika Srpska was "temporarily held" at the Vienna airport on 6 May on a warrant issued by the Tribunal.

The Austrian authorities had announced that she was held on Interpol's international arrest warrant based on the 1992 indictment that the legal organs of Bosnia and Herzegovina issued against Plavsic as an "ideologue of ethnic cleansing." But certain media - citing "reliable sources" - have speculated that the Tribunal was instructed to cancel the warrant for her arrest in January 1998 after she began co-operating with the international community and recommended Milorad Dodik for the post of prime minister in Republika Srpska.

Rejecting "in strongest possible terms" the suggestion that the Tribunal and its prosecutor were "influenced for political reasons to withdraw a warrant of arrest in respect of Biljana Plavsic," the 13 May statement asserted that "the prosecutor regards her independence, which was granted by the Security Council when the Tribunal's Statute was enacted, as being a matter of fundamental principle. Any attempt to exert any political influence on the prosecutor would not be tolerated and would be publicly condemned."

**Location:** [Bosnia and Herzegovina](#)

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

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