

Rajic Sentencing Hearing

Author: [IWPR](#)

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Rajic pleaded guilty in October 2005 to four counts of breaches of the Geneva conventions while he was a commander in the Croatian Defence Council, HVO, in the Kiseljak and Vares areas of Bosnia in 1993.

As part of a plea agreement with prosecutors, he agreed to testify in other war crimes cases in return for a recommendation that he be sentenced to no more than 15 years' jail time.

Judges are not obliged to act in line with such agreements, however, and had scheduled this week's hearing in order to hear submissions on the matter from defence counsel and prosecutors.

Prosecutor Kenneth Scott described in detail the "horror" that occurred in the Bosnian villages of Stupni Do and Vareš when HVO took control of them after an attack during October 22 and 23, 1993.

According to prosecutors, up to 36 Muslims were killed in Vareš and around 37 in Stupni Do. And even though Scott acknowledged that the numbers may be low in comparison with other war crimes cases at the tribunal, the severity of those crimes give them a heavy weight.

He described how civilians were robbed, beaten, tortured and killed. Some were locked in houses and burned alive. Among the victims were a large number of children.

"Now after 12 years we are here and Mr Rajić is here, found guilty. The victims have waited a long time for justice," said the prosecutor.

No one was punished for these crimes and Rajić was even promoted.

Rajić was represented by defence counsel Doris Košta who was expected to present mitigating arguments.

Miroslav Bralo was sentenced to 20 years in prison, at the end of last year after pleading guilty to two counts of grave breaches of the Geneva conventions, two counts of war crimes and three of the laws or customs of war, for his role in the Amice massacre in central Bosnia in 1993.

Location: [Bosnia and Herzegovina](#)

Topic: [Kratke Vesti](#)

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