

Saga Continues Over Disclosure of Milosevic Files

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Lawyers Steven Kay and Gillian Higgins say it was the former Yugoslav president's wish that pleadings and records relating to his medical treatment in The Hague and his efforts to secure temporary release to receive care in Moscow should be made public.

When they considered approaching the chamber that had been overseeing Milosevic's trial with their request, however, they were told by the court's registry that these judges no longer had anything to do with the case.

When they asked another set of judges - whose job it was to decide whether confidential documents could be released for the purposes of an inquest and inquiry - they were again told on April 6 that this particular issue was not their business.

Kay and Higgins' latest moves were to simultaneously appeal this latter decision and also request that Judge Pocar convene a trial chamber to decide whether the documents in question can be unsealed.

In his response, published on April 25, Judge Pocar said he didn't consider it appropriate to convene a trial chamber to address the matter while the defence lawyers' appeal against the April 6 decision was still outstanding.

He therefore stayed the defence counsels' request until after the appeals judges have issued their decision.

Tests carried out on a blood sample taken from Milosevic earlier this year revealed the presence of a drug which had not been prescribed to him by court doctors and which is known to counteract medicines he was taking for high blood pressure.

After Milosevic died, it was revealed that he had written to the Russian authorities suggesting that he was being poisoned. There has also been speculation that he may have been taking the illicit medicine in an effort to worsen his own health and improve his chances of being released for treatment in Moscow.

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