

Serb Officer Charged With Contempt

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By Merdijana Sadovic (TU No 524, 2-Nov-07)

A Bosnian Serb officer convicted of war crimes committed in Srebrenica in 1995 was this week indicted by the Hague tribunal for contempt of court, because he refused to testify at the ongoing trial of his fellow officers charged with the same crime.

In 2005, Dragan Jokic, former chief of the engineering in the Bosnian Serb army, VRS, Zvornik Brigade, was sentenced to nine years in prison. His sentence was confirmed in May this year.

He was found guilty of aiding and abetting executions of about 8,000 Muslim men and boys in Srebrenica and their burial in mass graves, after the town was overrun by Serb forces in July 1995.

Jokic is currently in a UN detention center in the Hague, awaiting transfer to a country where he will serve his sentence.

On October 31 and November 1, Jokic was called by the tribunal's prosecutors to testify under protective measures at the trial of seven VRS police and military officers, charged with genocide and other war crimes at Srebrenica.

However, he refused to do so, claiming he was "mentally unable" to give evidence in this case.

On November 1, the tribunal judges ruled that Jokic was in contempt of court.

"Being called to testify before the...tribunal, [Jokic] knowingly and willfully interfered with the administration of justice by contumaciously refusing to testify, contrary to the tribunal's rules," said the judges, adding they would "prosecute the matter themselves".

Merdijana Sadovic is IWPR's Hague programme manager.

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