

Seselj Makes Black Magic Claim

Author: [Rachel Irwin](#)

Defendant alleges that new contempt hearing date was set to coincide with the anniversary of Hitler's death.

In his first appearance on contempt charges this week, Serbian nationalist Vojislav Seselj failed to enter a plea and accused the Hague tribunal of "trying to attract some black magic" in the scheduling of his court date.

Seselj's original initial appearance was set for April 20, but widespread flight cancellations due to the volcanic eruption in Iceland made it impossible for the appointed prosecutor, Bruce MacFarlane, to appear in court on that date.

This week, however, Seselj contended that the reason the April 20 hearing was cancelled was because "a number of judges and prosecutors celebrated [Adolf] Hitler's birthday".

"Here in this tribunal there seems to be people for whom Hitler is an ideological leader," Seselj exclaimed. "I was astounded to learn of that!"

He then alleged that the new hearing date - April 29 - was set to coincide with the anniversary of Hitler's death.

"There is a demon sector at the head of this tribunal, and failing to settle accounts with me [after] more than seven years, [the court] is trying to attract some black magic," Seselj exclaimed.

MacFarlane, the appointed prosecutor, responded by saying that "the accused's conspiracy theory is simply wrong, period".

MacFarlane reiterated that he could not fly to Europe for the April 20 hearing and that the new hearing date was scheduled around flight availability and "for no other reason".

"I wish to completely disagree with the suggestion of the accused," MacFarlane said

On February 4, Seselj was charged with contempt of court for disclosing information about 11 protected witnesses in one of his books.

The order issued in lieu of an indictment states that the book contains the real names, occupations and places of residence of these witnesses, allowing them to be identified.

Seselj, who will continue to represent himself, declined to enter a plea this week, complaining that the prosecution failed to turn over documents that he considers key to his case.

Judge Burton Hall said it was within Seselj's rights to wait until ten days after his initial appearance before entering a plea.

On April 12, Seselj filed a motion to disqualify Judges O-Gon Kwon and Kevin Parker from hearing his contempt case.

That motion remains confidential, but in a subsequent public order on April 27, Judge Kwon, who is presiding over the case, wrote that Seselj's motion describes two of his books, the titles of which refer to Judges Kwon and Parker.

The titles "contain offensive language that is inappropriate for submissions that are to be filed publicly before this tribunal", Judge Kwon stated.

He ordered the registrar to remove the titles of the books, as well as some other information, before making the motion public.

During this week's hearing, Seselj made several disparaging remarks about Judges Kwon and Parker, and said he was convinced that it was "impossible from a legal point of view for them to stay on the case".

Due to Seselj's motion to disqualify the two judges, Judge Hall noted that the proceedings cannot immediately continue and he said the next hearing would be announced at a later date.

This is the second time that Seselj has faced contempt charges. Last July, he was sentenced to 15 months in prison for revealing details about protected witnesses in one of his books. He is currently appealing

against that conviction.

In parallel criminal proceedings, Seselj is charged with nine counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity – including murder, torture and forcible transfer – for atrocities carried out between August 1991 and September 1993, in an effort to expel the non-Serb population from parts of Croatia and Bosnia.

Arrested in 2003, Seselj remains leader of the Serbian Radical Party, SRS, based in Belgrade.

Rachel Irwin is an IWPR reporter in The Hague .

Location: Balkans

Topic: War crimes

Focus: International Criminal Tribunal for the former
Yugoslavia

Source URL: <https://iwpr.net/global-voices/sesejl-makes-black-magic-claim>