

## **Seselj Convicted of Contempt for Second Time**

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Book he wrote contained identifying information about protected witnesses.

Serbian nationalist politician Vojislav Seselj was convicted of contempt and sentenced to 18 months in prison this week for revealing details about protected witnesses in a book he authored.

It is the second time Seselj has been convicted of contempt for revealing identifying information about protected witnesses.

On the first occasion, in 2009, he was sentenced to 15 months in prison. A third, upcoming case initiated at the end of May and still the pre-trial phase relates to confidential material that Seselj allegedly failed to remove from his website.

In its judgement this week, the bench found that Seselj's book contained identifying information about ten protected witnesses, and violated decisions on protective measures issued by judges in his ongoing trial.

Furthermore, they found that Seselj was aware that protective measures can only be altered by the judges who ordered them, and that Seselj "could not simply reveal the identity of witnesses who had been granted protective measures as he saw fit".

The bench also rejected Seselj's contention that the judges in his criminal trial had concluded that "each witness can eventually decide for himself whether to testify with protective measures". This statement actually pertained to just one witness, judges said, noting that "had the Seselj trial chamber wished to lift the protective measures in place for other witnesses, it would have done so".

The 18-month prison sentence is meant to "discourage this type of behaviour", presiding Judge O-Gon Kwon said as he read out the verdict in open court on October 31.

The bench further noted Seselj's "lack of remorse" or recognition of the impact his conduct might have on "witnesses' confidence in the tribunal's ability to guarantee the effectiveness of protective measures".

In response to this, Seselj grinned and laughed out loud.

Since his surrender to the tribunal in 2003, Seselj has insisted on representing himself and has vowed on numerous occasions to "destroy" the Hague tribunal.

He is charged with nine counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity – including murder, torture and forcible transfer – for atrocities carried out in an effort to expel the non-Serb population from parts of Croatia and Bosnia between August 1991 and September 1993. He remains leader of the Serbian Radical Party, SRS, based in Belgrade.

Seselj's criminal trial began in November 2007, a year after the original trial date was postponed because he went on hunger strike. Since he will not be calling any witnesses to testify on his behalf, the closing arguments in his trial will be heard in March 2012.

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

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