

## **Transcripts Suggest Croatia Conspired to Break Up Bosnia**

Tribunal prosecutors want controversial presidential transcripts to be admitted into evidence in the case against six Bosnian Croat officials.

The highest levels of the Croatian government secretly worked to seize part of Bosnia while pretending friendship with the Sarajevo government, according to documents prosecutors have asked to be admitted as evidence in the case against six high-ranking Bosnian Croat officials currently standing trial in The Hague.

The documents, transcripts of the then Croatian president Franjo Tudjman's conversations, show Croatian officials believed the West supported it in its undercover bid to prevent a Muslim state being created in Europe.

Jadranko Prlic, Bruno Stojic, Slobodan Praljak, Milivoj Petkovic, Valentin Coric and Berislav Pusic were senior political and military leaders of the self-proclaimed Croat entity known as Herceg Bosna.

They face 26 charges of war crimes for the expulsion and murder of Muslims in Bosnia during the Croatian-Muslim conflict in 1993.

They are also accused of being part of a joint criminal enterprise to politically and militarily subjugate and ethnically cleanse Bosnian Muslims and other non-Croats from parts of Bosnia that they claimed as Herceg Bosna and to join this territory to a "Greater Croatia".

Also allegedly involved in this enterprise were Tudjman, former Croatian defence minister Gojko Susak and Mate Boban, president of Herceg Bosna. All three are now deceased.

On October 29, the prosecutors asked the judges to admit into evidence 87 transcripts of president Tudjman's meetings with various people that took place at the time relevant to the indictment.

Most of these transcripts have already been admitted in part or in full as evidence in other trials held at the Hague tribunal.

Several of the transcripts record how Tudjman ordered regular Croatian troops to be secretly sent to Bosnia to set up checkpoints and to support the Croats living there.

"Gentlemen, we've succeeded, we've succeeded in getting not just Herceg Bosna, which is what we had. We've [now] got - we can say this among ourselves - half of Bosnia, if we're good at governing it, if we govern cleverly," said Tudjman at a meeting with representatives Herceg Bosna on November 24, 1995.

Tudjman also regularly referred to Croatia as being on the front line against the expansion of world Islam, and even expressed sympathy for the Serbs because they are fellow Christians.

“Europe and the world are a bit afraid of... the creation of an Islamic [state] in Europe. So that they would even be inclined for a division [of Bosnia] to be carried out between Croatia and Serbia in order to avoid having that separate Muslim state, you know,” said Tudjman on January 8, 1992.

The judges are expected to rule soon on whether all these transcripts will be admitted into evidence against the six accused Bosnian Croat officials.

Oliver Bullough is an IWPR editor.

**Location:** Serbia  
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