

## **Tribunal Update 78: Last Week in The Hague (25-30 May 1998)**

**Author:** [IWPR](#)  
[ICTY](#)

SFOR Arrests Omarska Shift Commander

The NATO-led force's first arrest operation (on 10 July 1997 in Prijedor) was carried out a day after the NATO summit was concluded in Madrid (where, as it was later learned, the British SAS received a green light for the operation at a meeting between U.S. President Bill Clinton, British Prime Minister Tony Blair, and NATO's Secretary General Javier Solana); the second such operation took place on 18 December 1997 in Vitez, following a ministerial meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Brussels.

The pattern was interrupted with the 22 January arrest of Goran Jelusic (a.k.a. "Serbian Adolph") in Bijeljina and the 8 April arrests of Miroslav Kvočka and Mladen Radic in Prijedor, but the most recent operation, which ended in the arrest of Milošević "Krlje" Kos, coincided with the semi-annual foreign ministers' session of the North Atlantic Council. One should hope that the mid-June meeting of NATO defense ministers will be "marked" by a similar endeavor.

On the afternoon of 28 May, SAS commandos from the SFOR contingent surrounded Kos in the vicinity of his apartment in Banja Luka. Aware of the fate of Simo Drljaca (killed) and Vlatko Kupreskic (wounded) in similar encounters, the former shift commander at the Omarska camp offered no resistance.

He was transferred to the Tribunal's Detention Unit on the same day, and his initial appearance before the trial chamber is scheduled for Tuesday, 2 June. Kos will be asked to enter a plea of guilty or not guilty to 11 charges: 4 counts of crimes against humanity, 3 counts of violations of the laws and customs of war, and 4 counts of grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions.

The most recent arrival at the Tribunal's Detention Unit is one of the eight accused in the Omarska Indictment, originally issued in February 1995 against 19 Bosnian Serbs. The indictment was revised in May this year, when charges against 11 persons who did not hold command posts in that infamous camp were dropped.

Its current form (see Tribunal Update 75) names the camp commander (Zeljko Meakic, accused of genocide), his two deputies, three shift commanders, and "two visitors" of the camp, who, according to the prosecutor, particularly excelled in the sadistic treatment of detained Muslim and Croat civilians .

Of the eight accused, four are already in the Tribunal's hands: besides Kos, another former shift commander (Radic), a former deputy commander (Kvočka), and one of the "visitors" of the camp (Zoran Zigic) are also in custody. The latter three have pleaded not guilty to all charges.

Only Zigic is charged with direct participation in 15 cases of individual or mass killings, beatings, and torture, which are qualified in a total of 69 counts(see Tribunal Update 73). The other three detainees are held responsible for the alleged criminal conduct of their subordinates, in line with the principle of command responsibility.

According to the indictment, they "knew or had reason to know" that persons in position of subordinate authority to them "regularly and openly killed, raped, tortured, beat, and otherwise subjected [the Omarska camp] prisoners to conditions of constant humiliation, degradation, and fear of death."

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

---

**Source URL:** <https://iwpr.net/global-voices/tribunal-update-78-last-week-hague-25-30-may>