

PUBLIC STATEMENT

Bosnia-Herzegovina Arrest by SFOR troops -- a positive step

Amnesty International welcomed reports that troops of the Stabilization Forces (SFOR) deployed in Bosnia-Herzegovina arrested Bosnian Serb Dragan Kulundžija yesterday, who had been publicly indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (Tribunal) for crimes against humanity, grave breaches of the 1949 Geneva Conventions and violations of the laws or customs of war.

For more than two years, the organization has been actively lobbying governments supplying troops to the multinational Stabilization Force (SFOR) to give effect to SFOR's mandate to seek out and arrest those indicted by the Tribunal, as well as urging governments to cooperate effectively with the Tribunal.

To date more than half the number of the publicly indicted suspects remain at large, among them Bosnian Serbs Radovan Karadžić and Ratko Mladić, who have both been charged with genocide against the Bosniac population. Reliable reports indicate that Radovan Karadžić was repeatedly waved through checkpoints by the predecessor of SFOR, the multinational Implementation Force (IFOR) and that Ratko Mladić had ample warning before IFOR visited his headquarters so that he could leave before it arrived .

Amnesty International has repeatedly argued that in particular their arrest would send the strongest possible deterrent message to those committing crimes against humanity and violations of international humanitarian law in the ongoing armed conflict in Kosovo province.

Amnesty International has expressed its concern that the reported draft peace agreement for Kosovo does not provide for the arrest of persons indicted by the Tribunal for violations of human rights and humanitarian law in that province and has called for the peace agreement expressly to require any international peace-keeping operation to search for and arrest persons indicted by the Tribunal.

Dragan Kulundžija is charged with being criminally responsible, as a commander, for killings, torture and ill-treatment, and inhumane conditions in the Bosnian Serb-held Keraterm detention camp in northwest Bosnia where some 3,000 mainly Bosniac prisoners were held in 1992. He was the guard-shift commander of the camp and, as such, is believed to have ordered and participated in the killing of at least 140 men from the Brdo area in July 1992.

Seven other Bosnian Serbs have been indicted jointly with Dragan Kulundžija for crimes committed in Keraterm. Of these, only one other suspect, Zoran Đigić, -- who is additionally charged with crimes committed in the Omarska detention camp -- is currently in the Tribunal's custody. Because of the Tribunal's lack of resources to tackle its vast outstanding caseload, charges against a

further five suspects named in the same indictment were withdrawn by the Tribunal's Prosecutor in May 1998.

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For further information on human rights violations committed in the Keraterm camp in 1992, please see *Bosnia-Herzegovina : Gross abuses of basic human rights* (AI Index: EUR 63/01/92, October 1992). For further information on the Keraterm indictment, please consult the Tribunal's website on : <http://www.un.org/icty>.