



Monitoring of War Crimes Trials

Zagreb, September 23 2016

REPORT ON THE FIRST HEARING IN TRIAL OF DRAGAN VASILJKOVIĆ

The trial of Dragan Vasiljković (aliases Captain Dragan, Daniel Snedden) commenced on 20 September 2016 at the County Court of Split and is presided over by judge Damir Romac.

Criminal proceedings against Mr. Vasiljković have been ongoing since December 2005, when the County Court of Šibenik launched an investigation into crimes committed 14 and 12 years earlier.

It is based on this Šibenik County Court's decision that the Australian authorities initiated extradition proceedings against Mr. Vasiljković, a holder of dual citizenship with Serbia and Australia to deliver him to Croatia.

He was extradited in July 2015 and remanded at Split Prison. The investigation Croatian judiciary has been conducting for almost 10 years was at last crowned with an indictment in January 2016.

Mr. Vasiljković has been in custody since January 2006, with short intervals of being outside.

He is facing charges for war crimes on the basis of superior and individual criminal responsibility. He failed to prevent his subordinates from torturing POWs and civilians held in an improvised prison facility in Knin Fortress between June and July 1991, issued orders to execute two captured members of the HV in February 1993 in Bruška near Benkovci and partook in the development of a plan of assault on a police station and the villages surrounding Glina during which civilians were killed, wounded and deported, and which left numerous houses and infrastructure damaged.

The trial opened with the reading of the indictment. Mr. Vasiljković pleaded not guilty. All parties to the proceedings offered their opening statements. The Accused was properly informed of the procedure. He is guaranteed a professional defence by the counsel of his own choosing.

The courtroom satisfies the standards required for adequate administration of justice. Two security checks are performed, one at the main entrance and the other at the courtroom entrance, while the order is maintained by 7 court officers.

The trial is scheduled to proceed on 18, 19 and 20 October 2016, at 09:00 h. Twelve witnesses will be questioned.