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Maximum sentence for Goran Stanisic accused for war crimes in the villages of Sllovi/Slovinje and Tërbovc/Trbovce

The Trial Panel of the Special Department of the Basic Court of Prishtinë/Priština (presided by Judge Valon Kurtaj¹), on October 5, 2021, found the accused Goran Stanišić guilty of war crimes against the civilian population and sentenced him to imprisonment of twenty (20) years, which is the maximum sentence for this criminal offense, according to the SFRY Criminal Law, which is more favorable in this case.

The Humanitarian Law Center in Kosovo (HLCK) has systematically monitored the trial against the accused Stanišić. Based on the monitoring of the trial, the HLCK finds that the trial was fair and the rights of the parties during the proceedings were respected, despite the difficulties in organizing the trial due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The verdict was announced after 15 court hearings, where 22 witnesses were heard, among them the injured party A1.²

Upon the process of evidence presentation during the main trial some prosecution witnesses have identified the presence of the defendant at the place and time of the deportation and killing of Albanian civilians. However, the statements of some eyewitnesses given to the UNMIK Mission, and later to the Special Prosecution of the Republic of Kosovo (SPRK), were inconsistent regarding the participation of defendant Stanišić in the killing of civilians.

HLCK is reluctant to comment on the verdict and the extent of the sentence at this point until receiving the verdict in writing along with the reasoning for this verdict. Upon the announcement of the verdict, the trial panel did not provide any reasoning regarding the announced verdict. It is therefore unknown what evidence the trial panel relied on when making its decision on the defendant's conviction. The lack of a reasoning for the decision on

¹ Members of the Trial Panel, Musa Konxheli and Valbona Musliu Selimaj.

² A1 is the injured party who was wounded on 16 April 1999 near the Tërbovc Village.



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convicting the defendant is contrary to Article 366, paragraph 2 of the CPCRK. This article stipulates that after the public reading of the enacting clause of the verdict, the reasoning of the verdict must be briefly announced, respectively the evidence on which the Trial Panel was based. It is also necessary that in this case, the Trial Panel gives a reasoning regarding the aggravating or mitigating circumstances, which have influenced the defendant to be found guilty and sentenced to maximum imprisonment.

On February 6, 2020, the SPRK³ has filed an indictment against Goran Stanišić, accused of having been a member of the reserve police force of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, who during the period of 15 and 16 April 1999, as part of a broad and systematic attack by Serbian military, paramilitary and police forces against the Albanian civilian population in the villages of Sllovi/Slovinje and Tërbovc/Trbovce in the Municipality of Lipjan/Lipljane, and in cooperation with other members of this unit, participated in the deportation of the Albanian civilian population, committing the murders of 13 Albanian civilians and wounding A1. The first instance court found him guilty on all counts of the indictment.

The parties have the right to appeal against this verdict in the Court of Appeals.

³ The indictment was filed by the Special Prosecutor, Drita Hajdari.