

## Justice for Srebrenica progresses as Ratko Mladić convicted

Orchestrator of the Srebrenica massacre convicted for crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide under the International Criminal Tribunal of the former Yugoslavia

By [Ed Smith](#)

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The 'Butcher of Bosnia', as Mladić is most commonly known has been found guilty of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity by the UN Tribunal at The Hague.

The court verdict came delayed after Mladić, now aged 75, requested a bathroom break, then asking for the proceedings to be shortened or adjourned because of high blood pressure. Though the latter was denied, he invigorated resentment from the court as he entered the courtroom with thumbs up and smiles.

The Former Serbian Army General spent fourteen years as a fugitive after the Srebrenica and Siege of Sarajevo where thousands of Bosnian Muslims and many other civilians were brutally murdered under the orders of the 'butcher'. His time as a fugitive was generally protected by for Bosnian Serb officers who kept the safety and location of the General hidden by constantly moving to different military bases. The loyalty to the former general is defined by his home village's retainment of the street named after him as he is seen as a symbol of defiance and national pride.



Sarajevo pictured in 1996

This stands testament to the claims that the war crimes committed by the Bosnian Serb military that were so staunchly refuted by Milosevic's Serbian Government, were clearly true. Safety and security were thus extricably connected to loyalty, which only came crashing down when the institutions and groups that kept Mladić secure, fell to the long arm of the law.

As a part of International Criminal Tribunal on the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) the former General faced 11

charges including two genocide, five crimes against humanity and four war crimes. With only one count of genocide cleared, he is now to be convicted of ten serious crimes relating to his systematic ethnic cleansing, tying Bosnian Muslims and UN personnel to Serb military equipment to deter Nato airstrikes and the ruthless murdering of 8000 Muslim men and boys in Srebrenica.



Coffins mark the ten year anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide

Mladić's trial took 530 days over four years, making it arguably the most poignant convictions since the Nuremberg trials, largely because Serb leader Milosevic died shortly before his conviction. This is not be understated however as nearly 600 people gave evidence against the former general, despite attempts by the defence arguing that his deteriorating health, would only be worsened by stress of the trial. However, any sympathy for the 75 year old was soon erased as Mladić made a cut throat gesture to one mother of the 8000 men and boys who died in Srebrenica and continually heckled judges. Most notably judge Alphons Orié dismissed mitigation pleas that he was in poor physical and mental health, but remained of 'good character'.

Indeed, prosecutor Alan Tieger summarised quite emphatically in the close of the prosecution last December, Mladić needs "to be held accountable for each of his victims and all the communities he destroyed... the depth for which Mladić is responsible" for is unimaginable.

The trial and conviction eighteen months after Radovan Karadžić was sentenced to 40 years imprisonment for his part in the Srebrenica genocide, with Mladić the last to be sentenced by the ICTY.



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