

## **Former Yugoslav Leader Milosevic Found Dead in Cell in the Hague, Apparently of Natural Causes**

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By ARTHUR MAX, Associated Press Writer

AMSTERDAM, Netherlands -- Slobodan Milosevic, the former Yugoslav leader, who was branded "the butcher of the Balkans" and was on trial for war crimes after orchestrating a decade of bloodshed during the breakup of his country, was found dead Saturday in his prison cell. He was 64.

Milosevic, who suffered chronic heart ailments and high blood pressure, apparently died of natural causes and was found in his bed, the U.N. tribunal said, without giving an exact time of death.

He had been examined by doctors following his frequent complaints of fatigue or ill health that delayed his trial, but the tribunal could not immediately say when he last underwent a medical checkup. All detainees at the center in Scheveningen are checked by a guard every half hour.

The tribunal said Milosevic's family had been informed of his death, which came nearly five years after he was arrested, then extradited to The Hague.

His wife, Mirjana Markovic, who was often accused of being the power behind the scenes during her husband's autocratic rule, has been in self-imposed exile in Russia since 2003. His son, Marko, also lives in Russia, and his daughter, Marija, lives in Serb-controlled half of Bosnia.

Borislav Milosevic, who lives in Moscow, blamed the U.N. tribunal for causing his brother's death by refusing him medical treatment in Russia.

"All responsibility for this lies on the shoulders of the international tribunal. He asked for treatment several months ago, they knew this," he told The Associated Press. "They drove him to this as they didn't want to let him out alive."

Milosevic asked the court in December to let him go to Moscow for treatment. But the tribunal refused, despite assurances from the Russian authorities that the former Yugoslav leader would return to the Netherlands to finish his trial.

Milosevic has been on trial since February 2002, defending himself against 66 counts of crimes, including genocide, in Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo. But the proceedings were repeatedly interrupted by Milosevic's poor health and chronic heart condition.

He was accused of orchestrating a brutal campaign of ethnic cleansing against non-Serbs during the collapse of the Yugoslav federation in an attempt to link Serbia with Serb-dominated areas of Croatia and Bosnia to create a new Greater Serbia.

Milosevic had spent much of the time granted to him by the U.N. court for his defense dealing with allegations of atrocities in Kosovo that took up just one-third of his indictment. He also faced charges of genocide in Bosnia for allegedly overseeing the slaughter of 8,000 Muslims from the eastern enclave of Srebrenica \_ the worst massacre on European soil since World War II.

The trial was recessed last week to await his next defense witness. Milosevic also was waiting for a court decision on his request to subpoena former President Bill Clinton as a witness.

Steven Kay, a British attorney assigned to represent Milosevic, said Saturday that the former Serb leader would not have fled, and was not suicidal.

"He said to me: 'I haven't taken on all this work just to walk away from it and not come back. I want to see this case through,'" Kay told the British Broadcasting Corp.

Milosevic's death came less than a week after the star witness in his trial, former Croatian Serb leader Milan Babic, was found dead in the same prison. Babic, who was serving a 13-year prison sentence, committed suicide.

His testimony in 2002 described a political and military command structure headed by Milosevic in Belgrade that operated behind the scenes.

Milosevic's death will be a crushing blow to the tribunal and to those who were looking to establish an authoritative historical record of the Balkan wars.

Though the witness testimony is on public record, history will be denied the judgment of a panel of legal experts weighing the evidence of his personal guilt and the story of his regime.

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