

# Bosnian TV reports on Rajic guilty plea fallout in Croatia

*BBC Worldwide Monitoring*  
*November 6, 2005 Sunday*

**Source: BHTV1, Sarajevo, in Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian 1900 gmt 3 Nov 05**

**Excerpt from report aired on "Javna tajna" (Public Secret) current affairs programme, broadcast by Bosnian public broadcaster BHTV1 on 3 November**

[Host Amir Zukic] -- Croatia may yet pay dearly for the admission of guilt by Ivica Rajic, who in his plea bargain with the Hague prosecution has offered evidence on the involvement of Croatian forces in the war in our country. It is a public secret that as long as ten years ago Bosniak [Bosnian Muslim] and Croat officials agreed that, for the sake of peace in the house, they would not be raising the issue of the aggression by the Republic of Croatia against Bosnia-Herzegovina. Boris Grubestic has investigated what Rajic's admission has brought and who sent Croatian troops to Bosnia-Herzegovina:

[Reporter Boris Grubestic] -- Members of the Croatian intelligence service closely followed Ivica Rajic's guilty plea at the Hague tribunal. In addition to admitting his responsibility for the war crimes against Bosniak population in Stupni Do and Vares, in his written statement Rajic admitted that Croatia and the Croatian armed forces had been directly involved in the events in Central Bosnia in 1993.

[Passage omitted]

[Reporter] -- Following the admission, the tribunal also made public many documents that had been protected. Soon after the Stupni Do crimes, Ivica Rajic was given a different identity and continued commanding HVO [Bosnian Croat wartime army, Croat Defence Council] units under the name of Viktor Andric. After [the signing of] the Dayton [peace] agreement, the Croatian intelligence and security services helped him hide in Split for eight years. Only following the pressure exerted by Western countries and the conditionality attached to European integration, Croatian authorities extradited Rajic to the tribunal in the spring of 2003. Also afraid following Rajic's admission are the other indicted HVO and Herceg-Bosna [Bosnian Croat wartime para-state] officials awaiting trials before the Hague tribunal since Rajic has committed himself to testify in other cases.

[Ivo Pukanic of Zagreb-based weekly "Nacional"] -- Of two evils, he has chosen the much lesser one. And that he has got everyone around him in trouble [in the process], this now a problem for those who were with him. The question is where Ivica Rajic will be able to live once he has served his sentence. I sincerely doubt it that those whom he has got into trouble will leave him alone for as long as he lives.

[Reporter] -- Officials of the Croatian Civic Committee for Human Rights assert that evidence on Croatia's involvement in the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina is news only to those who have not wanted to know

about it. As long as 12 years ago, the committee collected evidence and statements of Croatian young men who, under direct orders from the Croatian army, were sent to frontlines in Bosnia-Herzegovina by force. If they refused, they were sent to military prison.

[Passage omitted]

[Reporter] -- Rajic's admission has confirmed the facts that had been presented over many years: that Croatia had been involved in the Bosniak-Croat conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina. However, analysts believe that this fact cannot stop Croatia on its road towards the European Union.

[Pukanic] -- Well, I believe that Croatia will face absolutely no consequences because of this. It was known even before and it was said several times in public that individual Croatian army units had been involved in the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Croatia has received a green light to start negotiations on joining the European Union. We must be realistic and say that de facto almost no-one in the world is interested any longer in the war that happened in the region of former Yugoslavia, especially in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

[Reporter] -- The defence of HVO general Tihomir Blaskic before the Hague tribunal was also based on assertions that the orders for the crimes in Ahmici village and in central Bosnia came from Zagreb, down a double chain of command. Historians have also registered many instances of direct presence of Croatian forces in the territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Professor Smail Cekic possesses evidence on the involvement of many Croatian Army units in conflicts in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

[Smail Cekic, of the Sarajevo-based Institute for Investigation of Crimes against Humanity] -- Numerous units were involved throughout the aggression, including 45 brigades, in their entirety or partially; then four regiments; eight battalions; one artillery regiment; two divisions; one mixed seaborne-assault/infantry unit; one helicopter squadron; two tactical groups; ten special units; and a number of commando and other units.

[Reporter] -- According to Cekic, evidence also exists of Croatian army leaders pulling the strings on frontlines in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

[Passage omitted]

[Reporter] -- Nevertheless, in 1994 an end was put to the Croat-Bosniak conflicts in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Washington peace agreement was signed. For evidently political reasons Croatia's responsibility for crimes in Bosnia-Herzegovina has never been raised before international courts. Witnesses of these events assert that the Washington Agreement was signed under the influence of the United States, which tried to reduce, at least a little bit, the extent of conflicts in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

[Passage omitted]

[Reporter] -- Jadranko Prlic and five more former high-level officials of former Herceg-Bosnia and HVO are awaiting the start of their trial before the Hague tribunal. This trial is certain to reveal new facts about the role of official Zagreb in conflicts in Bosnia-Herzegovina.