

Hague Tribunal Judge Stops Seselj's Testimony, Calls It Pointless

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ZAGREB, Sept 20 (Hina) - The two-week testimony of Serbian Radical Party leader Vojislav Seselj in the trial of former Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic at the UN war crimes tribunal in The Hague ended on Tuesday after the presiding judge decided to stop the hearing.

At the end of the first part of today's session, Judge Patrick Robinson stopped the hearing, saying that there would be no additional examination of the witness because it had become pointless and because Milosevic had no more relevant questions to ask.

Seselj, who himself is also indicted by the tribunal, continued denying the existence of a joint criminal enterprise by the political and military leadership of Serbia, Montenegro and the self-styled Serb statelets in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina in the first half of the 1990s.

Seselj kept saying that volunteers from his party had not committed crimes in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Prosecutor Geoffrey Nice refuted Seselj's allegations, citing extracts from a book written by Seselj, which show that Milosevic asked Seselj in 1992 to send more volunteers to war zones in Croatia.

Nice also cited a statement by a prosecution witness identified as C-057, who had fought as a member of the Yugoslav People's Army alongside Seselj's men in Croatia. The witness described Seselj's volunteers as a gang of bandits who cut off fingers and pulled out teeth from dead bodies in Vukovar for jewellery and gold.

Seselj's marathon testimony, which started on 17 August, has been much more useful to Milosevic's prosecutors than it has been to the defence. Apart from evidence against the accused, the witness has also presented a lot of self-incriminating evidence, despite warnings from judges that he was not required to do that.

Seselj's testimony was followed by that of retired Serbian General Bozidar Delic, who started his testimony before the tribunal's summer break. Delic spoke of the system of command in the Yugoslav Army's Pristina Corps during its military intervention in Kosovo in the spring of 1999.