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March 21, 2008

Former ICTY prosecutor reveals KLA organized organ smuggling of their kidnapped victims

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The former chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) Carla del Ponte reveals in her book “*Hunt – Me and War Criminals*” that the Hague prosecution had found out, while investigating the crimes the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) had committed against Serbs, Roma and other ethnic communities in 1999, that two persons, that had gone missing in the clashes in Kosovo, had been used in an organ smuggling operation.

The KLA was at the time led by the current Kosovo Prime Minister Hashim Thaqi, as well as by the two previous prime ministers Agim Ceku and Ramush Haradinaj, who is already on trial in The Hague.

The Tribunal's investigators and UNMIK officials received the information from reliable journalists who found out that in the summer of 1999, Kosovo Albanians had put more than 300 kidnapped persons in trucks and transported them across the border to the northern part of Albania.

The people were first imprisoned in camps located in Kukesh, Tripoje and other Albanian towns.

According to the journalists, physicians examined the younger and more vital prisoners, who got food and were not beaten. These men were then put in detention and other units, in Burel and its surrounding.

A group of these men were imprisoned in a hut behind the “yellow house,” some two dozen kilometres to the south of that town, Del Ponte said.

One of the rooms in the “yellow house,” as the reporters described it, served as an operating room in which surgeons took out the prisoners' organs. These organs were then transported, via the Rinas airport near Tirana, to surgical hospitals in abroad, where they were used for transplantation and were paid for.

The victims, which, for example, were left without one kidney, were imprisoned once again in the hut, in which they stayed until they were killed because of their other vital organs.

Among the people that were put in this hut there were also women from Kosovo, Albania, Russia and former Yugoslav republics, and two sources claimed that they helped the victims to be buried near the “yellow house” or in the nearby graveyard.



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Although the information obtained from the journalists and the UNMIK officials were insufficient, the ICTY investigators determined that the details matched and proved the data which the Tribunal had obtained.

All the persons, which, according to the sources, were put in the camps in Albania in the late summer of 1999, were reported as missing that very same summer and have never been seen since.

Del Ponte notes that the ICTY and UNMIK investigators, accompanied by journalists and an Albanian prosecutor, arrived in central Albania early in 2003, where they visited the “yellow house,” which the journalists claimed to be the place where prisoners had been murdered.

The house was now white, its owner denied that it had ever been repainted although the investigators found patches of yellow paint along the edges of the wall. The investigators also found parts of gauze, a used syringe, two plastic bags covered by mud, empty pill bottles some of which contained muscle relaxant pills that are used in operations, the former ICTY prosecutor wrote in the book.