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CROATIA: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CALLS FOR JUSTICE FOR SINIŠA GLAVAŠEVI_ AND OTHER VICTIMS OF UNLAWFUL EXECUTION IN VUKOVAR

As the funeral of Croatian journalist Siniša Glavaševi_ takes place in Zagreb today, more than five years after his "disappearance", Amnesty International renews its call on the international community to bring to justice those responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity in connection with the killing of hundreds of non-combatants at Vukovar in November 1991.

Pilates

Siniša Glavaševi_ was unlawfully executed after the fall of the city of Vukovar to the forces of the Yugoslav National Army (JNA) and Serbian paramilitary groups in 1991.

"It is appalling that the families and friends of Siniša Glavaševi_ and many others who were killed after the fall of Vukovar must now still wait for justice after waiting more than five years for the truth about the fate of their "disappeared" relatives and friends," Amnesty International said today.

In November 1995, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (Tribunal) charged three senior JNA officers in connection with the killings near Vukovar, but the persons charged with these killings remain free in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

Siniša Glavaševi_ was the managing editor of *Radio Vukovar* throughout the three-month siege of the Eastern Slavonian city in 1991. Along with the radio station's technician, Branimir Polovina, Glavaševi_'s body was recently exhumed from a mass grave at the village of Ov_ara, near Vukovar.

Investigators working for the Tribunal have now exhumed approximately 200 bodies from the site and confirmed that many of these were hospital patients and wounded soldiers removed by JNA forces from Vukovar hospital after the fall of the city. Autopsies have established that the victims died of wounds consistent with execution-style killing.

In a hearing at The Hague in March 1996 into the charges against the three JNA officers allegedly responsible, Tribunal prosecutor Grant Niemann described how those buried at the site had been "*...beaten in an orgy of violence for several hours, taken to their killing fields - where a mass grave had been prepared - and systematically murdered*".

Both Siniša Glavaševi_ and Branimir Polovina were featured cases in Amnesty International's 1993-94 Campaign against "Disappearances" and Political Killings. Branimir Polovina's funeral was held in Zagreb on 11 March.

“The identification of these two men as among those who were killed at Ov_ara and their funerals this week highlight the continuing failure of the international community to live up to its obligations to see that those responsible are brought swiftly to justice,” Amnesty International said. “The campaign for justice for Siniša, Branimir and all the others who died at Ov_ara must now continue.”

Amnesty International has repeatedly drawn attention to the international community’s duty to search for and arrest those responsible for grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions in connection with the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia since 1991.

The organization also calls on the authorities of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to cooperate fully with the Tribunal, and to ensure that those indicted by the Tribunal and still living within its jurisdiction are transferred to The Hague without further delay so that their guilt or innocence can be determined in a trial which satisfies international standards of fairness.

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