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## **Serbia must pursue others after Kosovo murders conviction**

Amnesty International has urged Serbia's authorities to help bring to justice all those involved in the 1999 murder of hundreds of Kosovo Albanians and subsequent cover-up, following the conviction at The Hague of former police general Vlastimir Đorđević.

Vlastimir Đorđević, 62, was convicted yesterday at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia of being responsible for the murder of at least 724 Kosovo Albanians, most of them unarmed civilians, and a cover-up operation involving the removal of nearly 900 bodies from Kosovo for burial in Serbia.

"Amnesty International welcomes the conviction of Vlastimir Đorđević, but calls on the Serbian authorities to redouble their efforts to ensure that all police officers and others suspected of the murder of ethnic Albanians and involvement in the cover-up operation, are brought to justice," said Nicola Duckworth, Director of the Europe and Central Asia Programme.

"They, and in particular the Ministry of Interior Police, must provide every assistance to the War Crimes Prosecutor to bring those responsible to justice."

Since 2001, the remains of 744 ethnic Albanians have been exhumed from a mass grave at a police base in Batajnica and 61 from a base in Petrovo Selo, where they had been taken as part of a coordinated operation to remove evidence of crimes committed by Serb forces on the orders of Slobodan Milošević, then President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

A further 84 bodies were also found near Lake Perućac.

Some of the bodies of those believed to have been transported in trucks to Serbia have still not been found.

"The relatives of the victims of enforced disappearances deserve justice and must be told of the fate and whereabouts of their family members," Nicola Duckworth said.

On 23 February, Vlastimir Đorđević was sentenced to 27 years imprisonment after being convicted of crimes against humanity and war crimes committed against Kosovo Albanian civilians in 1999.

A total of 1,822 ethnic Albanians, Serbs, Roma and others are still missing after the 1999 Kosovo war, according to the International Committee of the Red Cross.

### **Background**

Vlastimir Đorđević, former Assistant Minister of the Serbian Ministry of Internal Affairs and Chief of its Public Security Department, was found guilty of participating in a joint criminal enterprise in Kosovo in 1999, which included deportations, murders, forcible transfers and persecutions.

He was also found guilty of the deportation and forcible transfer of at least 200,000 Kosovo Albanians from the 13 municipalities listed in the indictment.

Vlastimir Đorđević was indicted in 2003 but was not arrested until June 2007 in Montenegro. His trial began in January 2009 and concluded in July 2010. Five other high ranking Serb political, military and police officials including some of those identified as participants in the joint criminal enterprise – including Nikola Šainović, then Deputy Prime Minister , and Sreten Lukić, head of the police staff for Kosovo, were convicted by the Tribunal of war crimes and crimes against humanity in February 2009.

Amnesty International has also called on the European Union-led police and justice mission in Kosovo to open an immediate investigation into the alleged involvement of Kosovo's Prime Minister Hashim Thaçi in the post-war abduction of Albanians and Serbs.