

High Representative Testifies for Prosecution at Hague Tribunal

The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, gave evidence on Wednesday to the International Criminal Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia at the Hague, in the case against Radoslav Brdjanin and Momir Talic. Appearing as a witness for the prosecution, the High Representative described his visits to Manjaca and Trnopolje camps in early August 1992.

In his evidence to the court, the High Representative described the "inhuman treatment" he saw in the Manjaca camp and the "indescribable squalor" of the Trnopolje camp. He emphasised that the inmates of these camps were in his view civilians and he said his main aim in visiting the two camps was "to halt or relieve the intensity of the suffering of people who had been caught in the middle of war, but above all to save lives." He said that in his view he had "never done a better day's work than his visit to the Manjac camp, which led to an improvement in conditions and the saving of lives. He added, however, that he "still feels haunted" by his visit to Trnopolje, noting that "had we been able to do more, the lives of those who were later killed may have been saved."

The High Representative said by visiting the two he had sought to raise International Community awareness of what was going on in the camps and ensure that the Red Cross and other humanitarian organisations could get access to them.