



HRSP NEWSLETTER

U.S. Department of Justice, Criminal Division, Human Rights and Special Prosecutions Section

June 2013

Bosnian National Extradited to Stand Trial for Murder and Torture

On May 31, 2013, the United States extradited Sulejman Mujagic (“Mujagic”), a citizen of Bosnia and Herzegovina (“Bosnia”) and a lawful permanent resident of Utica, New York, to stand trial for murder and torture during the armed conflict in Bosnia. Mujagic had been living in the United States since July 1997.

Mujagic is wanted in Bosnia for the March 1995 “unlawful killing and wounding of the enemy,” committed during the armed conflict that followed the breakup of the former Yugoslavia. Bosnia has alleged that Mujagic, then a platoon commander in the Army of the Autonomous Province of Western Bosnia, summarily executed an unarmed Bosnian Army soldier and tortured a second soldier after the two prisoners had been captured by Mujagic and his men.

In response to the Bosnian government’s request for extradition and in accordance with terms of the extradition treaty between the United States and Bosnia, the U.S. Department of Justice filed a complaint seeking Mujagic’s arrest and extradition in U.S. federal district court on November 27, 2012. Mujagic was arrested the following day in Utica, and a hearing to determine whether sufficient evidence existed to warrant his extradition was held on February 7, 2013.

On April 2, 2013, a federal district court in the Northern District of New York ruled that Mujagic could be extradited to Bosnia to stand trial. On May 31, 2013, Mujagic was delivered to Bosnian authorities and removed from the United States. The Office of the Cantonal Prosecutor of the Una-Sana Canton in Bihac is handling Mujagic’s prosecution in Bosnia. U.S. and Bosnian authorities have cooperated on numerous war crimes cases in the past and will continue to work closely together in the future to bring alleged perpetrators of war crimes and torture to justice.

Prior to his extradition, a federal grand jury in Syracuse, New York had charged Mujagic on February 9, 2012 with one count of physical and mental torture. Mujagic was indicted pursuant to a statute that criminalizes torture and provides U.S. courts jurisdiction to hear cases involving acts of torture committed outside the United States if the offender is present in the United States. The Department of Justice sought dismissal of that indictment after receiving Bosnia’s request for extradition, because the crimes took place in Bosnia, Bosnia had the ability to prosecute for both the alleged torture and murder, and the victim, the victims’ families, and all witnesses related to this case remained in Bosnia. The indictment was dismissed without prejudice on December 7, 2012.

This case was investigated by ICE’s Homeland Security Investigations office in Buffalo, with assistance from the ICE Human Rights Violators and War Crimes Center and INTERPOL Washington. At the Department of Justice, the case was handled by the Human Rights and Special Prosecutions Section, the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Northern District of New York, and the Office of International Affairs.

People with information about former human rights violators in the United States are urged to contact U.S. law enforcement: Human Rights and Special Prosecutions, hrsptips@usdoj.gov or 1-800-813-5863; Immigration and Customs Enforcement, 1-800-347 2423 or online tip form at <http://www.ice.gov/exec/forms/hsi-tips/tips.asp>); and FBI’s Genocide War Crimes Unit, tip form at <https://tips.fbi.gov/>.