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Russia Abstains From Vote on Yugoslav War Crimes Tribunal

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UNITED NATIONS — The UN Security Council on Monday extended the work of the judges of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, but Russia abstained from the vote because it said the resolution did not address inefficiencies of the court.

Since it was set up in 1993, the tribunal has indicted 161 people for crimes stemming from the wars that shattered the Yugoslav federation, of whom 15 have been acquitted. Proceedings are ongoing for 31 suspects.

But allies Russia and Serbia have sharply criticized the tribunal over recent decisions to free two Croatian generals and a Kosovo Albanian former guerilla commander.

"The work of the tribunal has serious systemic problems that this body is not dealing with by themselves," Russia's deputy UN envoy, Sergei Karev, told the 15-member council after the resolution was adopted, with 14 votes in favor.

(Reuters)

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