

# Russian Lawmaker: Hague's Yugoslav War Crimes Tribunal Should Be Abolished

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Russian federal lawmaker Alexei Zhuravlyov has proposed appealing to the United Nations General Assembly to abolish the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia because it "carries out U.S. orders," Izvestia reported Monday.

"We see that the Hague tribunal has turned into a punitive agency that carries out U.S. orders. People sit for decades on the dock without any specific charges against them or evidence that a crime was committed. And we are talking about some kind of mythical 'great European justice' — this is just ridiculous," Zhuravlyov was cited as saying.

Zhuravlyov, of the Rodina party, has prepared a draft bill that is now set to be considered by other lawmakers, the report said. The bill calls for the filing of an appeal with the UN addressing "the presence of serious flaws in the activities of the international tribunal"

and the abolition of the court, the report said.

The court was established by the UN Security Council in 1993 to prosecute crimes committed during the wars in the former Yugoslavia. But Zhuravlyov managed to work the ongoing Ukraine crisis into his argument for its liquidation.

Citing Novorossia, the self-proclaimed territory in eastern Ukraine controlled by pro-Russian separatists, Zhuravlyov said that "crimes are recorded there but they don't pay attention to that in the Hague."

"This is why we must ask ourselves: Either this institution works in accordance with the law, or this tribunal, which pays no attention to many crimes and only persecutes Serbs, isn't necessary," Zhuravlyov said.

A note appended to the draft bill says 155 people had been prosecuted since the start of the Hague's work in 1993, and 103 of those individuals were Serbian. In the course of the trials against them, 19 people have died, 16 of whom were Serbs, the document said.

The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, which can impose a maximum sentence of life imprisonment for perpetrators, was never meant to last forever. The UN Security Council has already urged the court to wrap up its work by the end of 2014, in which case any pending cases would be transferred to other jurisdictions, according to a Security Council resolution from December 2010.

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