

Name: Alert ID: TMML2024035508162 PARIS — The Bosnian Serb general who led the 1992-95 siege of Sarajevo, a modern-day European agony in which more than 10,000 civilians lost their lives to snipers or wanton artillery shelling, was arrested on war crimes charges Monday by NATO-led peacekeepers. A witness told journalists in Bosnia-Herzegovina that Stanislav Galic, 56, was detained after a jeep driven by peacekeepers cut off the car he was riding in in the northwestern city of Banja Luka. Soldiers of the NATO-led Stabilization Force then reportedly smashed the car window, opened the door and forced Galic out. He was made to lie on the ground, his hands were cuffed, and he was bundled away by the peacekeepers, said the witness, who spoke on condition that he not be identified. Galic was expected to be in The Hague within 48 hours for arraignment before the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, officials there said. His arrest was a major development in the search for justice in Bosnia, where the siege of the capital--the first in Europe since World War II--came to epitomize the suffering of ordinary people in the Balkan republic, the callous ruthlessness of ethnic Serbian forces and the inability of the outside world for a long time to do much about either. "For 44 months, the Sarajevo Romanija Corps [commanded by Galic in 1992-94] implemented a military strategy which used shelling and sniping to kill, maim, wound and terrorize the civilian inhabitants of Sarajevo," prosecutors at the U.N. tribunal in The Hague said in a statement after Galic's arrest. Under Galic, the prosecutors charged, Bosnian Serb troops in the hills overlooking the city "directed shelling and sniping at civilians who were tending vegetable plots, queuing for bread, collecting water, attending funerals, shopping in markets, riding on trams, gathering wood, or simply walking with their children or friends." According to Bosnia's Muslim authorities, 10,500 people, among them 1,650 children, perished during the siege, and more than 58,000 were wounded. "The attacks on Sarajevo civilians were often unrelated to military actions and were designed to keep the inhabitants in a constant state of terror," prosecutors in The Hague said. Galic was in command of the Romanija Corps when one of the most infamous incidents of the mostly Muslim city's ordeal occurred: the Feb. 5, 1994, shelling of the Markale outdoor market, in which 68 people were killed and more than 200 were wounded, some horribly. The marketplace carnage, heavily publicized by foreign television crews and print reporters, moved the outside world to action. The U.N. Security Council threatened the Bosnian Serbs with airstrikes. Four days after the market shelling, the Bosnian Serbs accepted a cease-fire that was to last several months and agreed to pull back their heavy artillery about 12 miles from Sarajevo. Galic retired from his command two months later. He became military advisor to Nikola Poplasen when the latter was elected to the presidency of Bosnia's Serb Republic in September 1998. In a secret indictment issued March 26 and sealed until Monday, Galic is charged with three violations of the laws and customs of war and four acts of crimes against humanity. He is the third senior Bosnian Serb commander arrested for alleged crimes during Bosnia's 1992-95 civil war. Already in custody in The Hague are Radislav Krstic, charged with genocide in the massacre of thousands of Muslims in Srebrenica in 1995, and Momir Talic, accused of leading a blood bath against Croats and Muslims in northwestern Bosnia in 1992. "This latest arrest of a retired major general in the Bosnian Serb army is in line with my policy of targeting senior figures in the chain of command for crimes committed during periods of armed conflict," said Carla del Ponte, chief prosecutor at the U.N. court. Her spokesman, Paul Risley, said the only two senior figures of the wartime Bosnian Serb leadership who remain at large are the Bosnian Serbs' then-president, Radovan Karadzic, and his military chief, Ratko Mladic. This year, Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic and a number of high-ranking members of the Serbian leadership were indicted for alleged crimes in Kosovo, a province of Serbia, Yugoslavia's dominant republic. They are still in Yugoslavia. The leadership of Bosnia's Serb Republic vigorously protested Monday's arrest, saying it jeopardized its attempts to cooperate with the war crimes tribunal. Officials in The Hague and at North Atlantic Treaty Organization headquarters in Brussels refused to divulge the nationality of the soldiers who grabbed Galic, apparently out of fear of reprisals by Bosnian Serbs. Banja Luka is headquarters of the British-controlled sector of the Balkan republic, and its garrison of troops from the NATO-led Stabilization Force is largely British.