

Linguistics, Translation & Interpreting Seminar 2022

The School of Humanities & Languages

Interpreting in War Crimes Trials – the Experience of International Courts and Tribunals



In this seminar Dr Alex Tomić, a former interpreter at the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and later Chief of Language Services at the International Criminal Court (ICC) discusses the interpreting practices of war crimes international courts and tribunals where multilingual proceedings are conducted with simultaneous interpretation. Dr Tomić's presentation will cover topics such as languages used in these courts, working conditions including preparation, and the emotional stress and coping mechanisms. She will particularly address interpreter training at ICC and other innovative practices she introduced as the Chief of Language Services. In addition to discussing the daily reality of interpreters working in international criminal courts, she will also discuss the challenges of their interactions with interpretation users: the accused, the witnesses, the judges and the lawyers, and other participants to these trials. The presentation will conclude with a Q&A from the floor.

Dr Alexandra Tomić (b. 1964, Belgrade) has lived in Belgrade (Yugoslavia/Serbia), Berne (Switzerland), Cambridge (UK) and Leiden (The Netherlands). She has a BA in French Language and Literature, and English Language and Literature from the Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade (1982). She completed a Masters in Military Studies with the American Military University (2013) and holds a PhD in History from Leiden University, Institute for History (2021). Throughout the years Alex worked as a language tutor, freelance translator, and then as a volunteer interpreter with the Dutch Refugees Council (1992-1994). Between 1994 and 2003, Alex was employed at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in The Hague where she worked as translator, field interpreter on missions, and in the booth for court hearings, working from her A languages (Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian) and her C language (French) into her B language (English). In 2003, at the time of the creation of the International Criminal Court (ICC), she was recruited as Chief of Language Services. At the ICC, Alex set up the Language Services of the Court, and managed them until 2020. She also organised testing, recruitment, and training of interpreters in European and African languages. Alex has been working as an external lecturer at her *alma mater* in Belgrade since 2017, teaching courses as part of the Masters in Conference Interpreting and Translation (MCIT). She now lives in Brussels as an independent researcher.

 19th April 2022

 6pm-7:30pm

 Online

Register here →

This event is free. It attracts 10PD points under the Naati category “Skills development and Knowledge” (1.4)

Any queries contact Professor Ludmila Stern:

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