

Carla Del Ponte - A War Crimes Prosecutor or A Guided Missile Against Syria?

By [Sarah Abed](#)

Global Research, August 20, 2017

[American Herald Tribune](#) 15 August 2017

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [Crimes against Humanity](#), [Law and Justice](#), [Terrorism](#), [United Nations](#), [US NATO War Agenda](#)

In-depth Report: [SYRIA](#)

Featured image: Carla Del Ponte, former member of Commission the Independent International of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic during the press conference. 8 February 2016. (Source: UN Photo /Jean-Marc Ferré/ flickr)

Only one week after announcing her decision to step down as one of the three members on the UN Independent Commission of Inquiry on Syria where she has spent five years since it's inception in September 2012, Carla Del Ponte told Swiss media in interviews published Sunday, that her team has collected enough evidence against the President of Syria, Dr. Bashar Al Assad to convict him of war crimes.

She stated that her reason for stepping down is due to frustration at the U.N. Security Council's failure to continue the commission's work by setting up a special tribunal for Syria that could try alleged war criminals.

"That is why the situation is so frustrating. The preparatory work has been done, but nevertheless, there is no prosecutor and no court," she told Sonntagszeitung. "It's a tragedy." She stated that "everyone in Syria is on the bad side. The Assad government has perpetrated horrible crimes against humanity and used chemical weapons. And the opposition is now made up of extremists and terrorists."

In Sunday's interviews, she said she had handed in her resignation letter last Thursday, and that she would officially step down on September 18, after the commission presents its latest report to the UN Human Rights Council. UN chief Antonio Guterres appealed last week for the commission to continue its work despite Del Ponte's departure.

As a veteran former war crimes Prosecutor and former Swiss Attorney General, Del Ponte has prosecuted war crimes in Rwanda and former Yugoslavia and is accustomed to high stress, high level corruption and crimes. Therefore her abrupt decision to step down and theoretically throw in the towel based on "frustration" seems a bit out of character for someone of her caliber.

Due to her obsessive perseverance her slain friend Giovanni Falcone had warmly dubbed her "the personification of stubbornness". Interestingly enough though, when she left a previous office in 2007 her two most high-profile targets (The former Bosnian Serb wartime leaders, Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic) were still at large. They have yet to be brought

to trial to face charges of genocide. Could this be a pattern for Ms. Del Ponte, the petite lawyer known for her ruthless pursuit of fugitives? Does frustration and the inability to carry out a task to completion cause her to quit time and time again?

A few additional nicknames Carla Del Ponte has been known by are [“the new Gestapo”, “the whore”, “the unguided missile”](#).

Del Ponte’s evident bias against the Syrian Government

As writer [Brandon Turbeville](#) states:

“In her remarks announcing her resignation, Del Ponte, who is 70 years old, also admitted her own bias against the Syrian government since the beginning of the crisis. She stated that, when she was first appointed to the Independent Commission of Inquiry On Syria in 2012, “the opposition (members) were the good ones; the government were the bad ones.” Apparently, the woman so concerned with “crimes against humanity” was fine with “opposition members” randomly shooting civilians, raping women, slaughtering whole families and villages, and committing unspeakable acts against Syrian military soldiers and Syrian civilians. After all, she considered them the “good ones.” Only when the Syrian military began fighting back in earnest did “war crimes” become a concern. “The Assad government is committing terrible crimes against humanity and using chemical weapons. And the opposition, that is made up only of extremists and terrorists anymore,” [she said](#).

[Del Ponte claims](#) that the Security Council should have appointed a court similar to the ones for Rwanda and Yugoslavia but the decision to do so was vetoed by Russia. Del Ponte is clearly frustrated at the fact that the Russians have prevented the U.N. from condemning and prosecuting Assad for crimes he did not commit. Thus, she will be leaving her post in September, leaving only two members left on the commission”.

Del Ponte under Investigation for bullying, bribery, and tainted evidence charges

In 2010, Judges at the UN war crimes tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague ordered an independent inquiry into the practices of Del Ponte and two prominent serving prosecutors, Hildegard Ürtz-Retzlaff and Daniel Saxon, after complaints from witnesses that they had been harassed, paid, mistreated and their evidence tampered with.

Ms. Del Ponte, the former war crimes prosecutor who put Balkan warlords and political leaders behind bars, was [investigated over claims that she allowed the use of bullying and bribing of witnesses, or tainted evidence](#).

In the eight years leading up to this investigation Del Ponte was a combative and divisive figure. As a determined Swiss investigator she served as her country’s ambassador to Argentina until she left her post in 2007.

The allegations against her concerned the working practices of her team of investigators in the prosecution for war crimes of the Serbian politician, Vojislav Seselj, a notorious warlord.

“Some of the witnesses had referred to pressure and intimidation to which they were subjected by investigators for the prosecution,” said a statement from the judge in the Seselj case. “The prosecution allegedly obtained statements illegally, by threatening, intimidating and/or buying [witnesses] off.”

One Serbian witness said he was offered a well-paid job in the US in return for testimony favourable to the prosecution.

“The statements mention sleep deprivation during interviews, psychological pressuring, an instance of blackmail (the investigators offered relocation in exchange for the testimony they hoped to obtain), threats (one, for example, about preparing an indictment against a witness if he refused to testify), or even illegal payments of money.”

An independent investigator, expected to be a French magistrate, is to report on the allegations within six months. Prosecutors in The Hague rejected the allegations while promising to co-operate with the inquiry.

Another call for an investigation against Del Ponte but this time with a request for sanctions against her as well

Yet again, Ms. Del Ponte was under investigation in 2012 when the counsel for Mr. Ante Gotovina filed a formal complaint and request for an [investigation and for sanctions](#) to be placed against her.

“We, the undersigned, were counsel for Mr. Ante Gotovina, who on 16 November 2012 was acquitted of all charges by the Appeals Chamber of the United Nations’ International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY). 1, On 20 November 2012, in an interview with the Serbian newspaper Blic, Ms. Carla Del Ponte, former ICTY Prosecutor and currently a member of the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria. 2, reacted to the ICTY Judgment with the following comments: “This is not justice; this is denial of a huge crime.” 3, She further elaborated on her position stating that the “Serbian Government and the Serbs cannot accept such a verdict and I completely agree with their televised statements because it is clear that the crime has been committed. We shall see what is going to happen next, but surely this is not justice.” 4, Her remarks were later published by other regional and international media. 5, Ms. Del Ponte’s improper media statements constitute a grave violation of Mr. Gotovina’s fundamental rights and are an unacceptable interference with the reputation and authority of the ICTY”.

They went on to say

“Clearly, Ms. Del Ponte is accusing the Appeals Chamber judges of corruption. This is highly inappropriate, especially where there is no basis whatsoever for such serious allegations. The United Nations must act immediately both to protect Mr. Gotovina’s fundamental rights and to protect the reputation of the United Nations and its judges. Remarkably, Ms. Del Ponte admitted that she made these statements before she had even read the judgement of the ICTY Appeals Chamber.”

Interview with David Greene putting blame on all Sides of the Syrian Conflict

On August 8th, 2017 [David Greene interviewed Carla Del Ponte](#), regarding the reason(s) why she decided to leave the UN Syria Commission. The complete interview is included below.

DAVID GREENE, HOST: A former war crimes prosecutor has decided that she is done. She's had enough of serving on a U.N. Syria commission because, in her words, the commission does absolutely nothing. This commission was investigating human rights violations. They released around a dozen reports on atrocities, but the United Nations never referred Syria to the International Criminal Court. Carla Del Ponte is the former prosecutor. She's on the line now from her home in Switzerland. Thanks for joining us.

CARLA DEL PONTE: Good morning for me, yes.

GREENE: Well – so tell me why you decided to quit this commission.

DEL PONTE: Myself and my colleagues in the commission, we could not do it. We could not achieve that. We were many time – Security Council in New York we were all called. We present twice a year a report to the Council of Human Rights. We travel around the world to persuade the states. No, nothing happened. Justice is not an issue to discuss. And so I got enough. And I quit.

GREENE: You had enough and quit. How much do you point the finger at Russia? Russia is a permanent member of the Security Council. They can veto anything. And they, of course, support the government of Bashar al-Assad. Are they a big reason that nothing has happened, in your mind?

DEL PONTE: Absolutely because they are putting the veto right – that no resolution for the constitution of the international tribunal. So, of course, Russia (unintelligible) because in the end what I mean is that the other states are not making pressure to Russia to change in his opinion. But in any case, that's politics. So myself – I'm ready to be prosecutor of a tribunal for Syria, but I'm not ready to continue to sit in this commission that just is an alibi for the international community.

GREENE: I just want to finish by asking you, I mean, you've worked doing this kind of work with Rwanda and the genocide there, with the former Yugoslavia. How does the war in Syria compare to those conflicts?

DEL PONTE: Well, you know, what I see myself is that the crimes that are committed in Syria are even much, much more horrible and terrifying what is happening in Syria. I never saw that kind of brutality. Not in the former Yugoslavia, not in Rwanda, but in Syria we are seeing atrocities that we can't even imagine. And that is something more why it's not possible to obtain justice.

GREENE: Is it all sides, not just the government in Syria?

DEL PONTE: Oh, yes. Oh, yes, all sides, All sides. But, you know, at the beginning in 2011, it was the government, the opposition – democratic opposition was the good side. But now, they are all all, all, all committing crimes. All parties on this conflict are committing crimes.

GREENE: That's former war crimes prosecutor Carla del Ponte speaking to us from Switzerland. Thank you very much for joining us. We appreciate it.

DEL PONTE: Thank you.

As we can decipher from her responses above, from just a few days ago, she clearly stated that “all sides” were committing crimes. She did not single out one side. One must then question why on Sunday she changed her narrative to implicate and allege that President Assad is guilty of war crimes. Also, Del Ponte has no reservations against blaming Russia for interference yet she completely leaves out the fact that the United States, the U.K, Saudi

Arabia, Qatar, Jordan, etc. have been supporting, backing, training, and funding the armed opposition terrorist groups that have carried out most of the atrocities in Syria during the past 6 years. Again if in fact she believes that ALL sides are responsible why is she only trying to convict one side with war crimes? The hypocrisy is blaring.

Attempting to frame President Assad with unreliable evidence while looking away from crimes committed by terrorists and their sponsors

Ms. Del Ponte is overly eager to prosecute President Assad for crimes he didn't commit while simultaneously looking past crimes that his adversaries did in fact commit.

The Syrian government led by Dr. Bashar Al Assad an ophthalmologist who is widely loved and respected and won his latest election in 2014 with 88.7% of the votes in what international observers who were present during the elections deemed as a fair and free election has denied reports by the commission documenting widespread war crimes committed by government-backed forces and Syria's security services.

[In her latest interview](#) with Swiss media on Sunday, Ms. Del Ponte expressed her resignation was also meant as a provocation. Adding that she hoped it would "put pressure on the Security Council, which must deliver justice to the victims." Del Ponte however said that if an international judicial process is eventually established for Syria, "I am ready to take on the position of international prosecutor." She stressed that international justice was vital for Syria, where the crimes committed were "far worse" than what she had seen in the former Yugoslavia. "Without justice in Syria, there will never be peace and thus no future," she said. "I do not want to be an alibi for an international community that is doing nothing at all," Del Ponte told Le Matin Dimanche, explaining her decision to leave the UN commission.

2013 Del Ponte blamed "rebels" for chemical weapons attack NOT the Syrian Government

In an interview with [Swiss-Italian TV in 2013](#), Ms Del Ponte, who served as a commissioner on the panel, said:

"Our investigators have been in neighbouring countries interviewing victims, doctors and field hospitals". "According to their report of last week, which I have seen, there are strong, concrete suspicions but not yet incontrovertible proof of the use of sarin gas, from the way the victims were treated...This was use on the part of the opposition, the rebels, not by the government authorities".

Interestingly enough, no calls to prosecute the nation's responsible for sponsoring these "rebels" were made.

This begs the question, why is Del Ponte more concerned with unverified information from unreliable sources which she is somehow wholeheartedly convinced is enough to charge President Assad with war crimes?

Effectively, a biased, unreliable, frustrated UN official has quit a mockery of an independent team which was set up to do a witch hunt rather than actually investigate war crimes in Syria, and the world is better off because of it. If this team actually cared about the truth and was procuring information via reliable sources they would [name and shame](#) the ones that are in fact responsible for this imposed war and invasion. They would call out the

United states for arming terrorists, and the UK, NATO, GCC, etc. for their involvement in fueling the armed opposition as well. They would charge Turkey and Jordan with crimes for allowing terrorists to cross the border into Syria to help with the [staged uprising](#) in 2011.

That would simply be asking too much from the UN which has chosen to have Saudi Arabia a leading violator of human and women's rights on both councils. The UN is a sham and does more harm than good and if there is any justice on earth it should be replaced with a group that actually does have the worlds best interests at heart, not one that is complicit in war crimes against humanity, that deliberately ignores real atrocities such as Saudi Arabia's genocidal war against Yemen, which is being fueled by weapons purchased from the US and UK.

In contrast to the West, and in particular the biased, untrustworthy UN Council which has been intent on destroying Syria and other Middle Eastern countries, Russia and Iran are playing a constructive role in preventing the overthrow of Assad and the formation of a fundamentalist Sunni government in the country, a group of German academics have written in an open letter.

A group of [German university professors have penned a joint statement](#) criticizing the mainstream media's portrayal of the roles of Russia and Iran in regulation of the Syrian conflict, Sputnik Deutschland reported. Called "a statement on the Syrian war," the declaration was written by the scientific advisory board of the German branch of Attac, an international organization that campaigns for alternatives to globalization.

"Russia and Iran exhausted all the possibilities for a diplomatic and peaceful solution to the conflict; (although) such an attempt seemed be futile at first, they have for the time being ended military attacks and the war in Aleppo. Therefore, we think the attacks on Russia in the mainstream media are absurd," they wrote.

The statement, written by 14 German university professors, recalls a 2011 interview with former NATO Secretary-General Wesley Clark, who revealed that just weeks after 9/11, the US had plans to not only invade Iraq, but five countries in the Middle East.

Until we hold the correct parties responsible for war crimes, and demand that countries take every precaution to help prevent additional wars, based on lies which are meant to essentially help our military industrial complex, and line the pockets of neocons in first world countries, then we will continue to watch as countries are destroyed, innocent people are killed, refugees are created, infrastructure is leveled, lives are ruined, and sovereign nations attacked for daring to not blindly follow and become subdued by powerful Western countries led by greedy, blood thirsty, war mongers.

Sarah Abed is an independent journalist and political commentator. Her articles can be read at the [Rabbit Hole](#).

The original source of this article is [American Herald Tribune](#)
Copyright © [Sarah Abed](#), [American Herald Tribune](#), 2017

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Sarah Abed](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca