

BELGRADE: Former Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic will face the International Criminal Tribunal in The Hague, Netherlands, charged with war crimes and genocide allegedly perpetrated during the Balkan wars in the 1990s.

The trial has been billed as the most significant of its kind since the Nuremberg trials of Nazi war criminals after World War II.

Legal experts say that, as the trial unfolds, prosecutors will face problems trying to prove Milosevic's guilt.

The dependability of some of their witnesses is uncertain. Milosevic has consistently refused to co-operate with the court and will represent himself, although the three-judge tribunal has appointed three ``friends of the court'' lawyers to assist him.

The no-nonsense judge in charge of the trial, Richard May, of Britain, previously has not hesitated to turn off Milosevic's microphone.

The initial phase of the trial will focus on atrocities committed by Serb security forces against ethnic Albanians in Kosovo in 1999.

Milosevic faces two counts of murder, one of deportation, one of forcible transfer and one of persecution on ethnic or religious grounds.