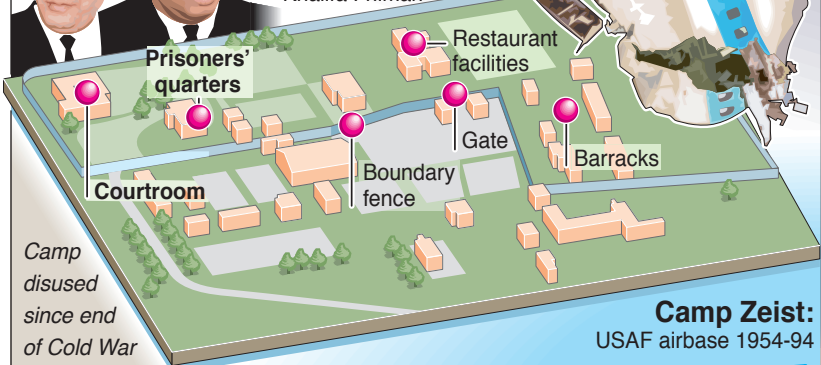


Long road to justice in Lockerbie trial

Legal history has been made with the pre-trial hearing of two Libyans charged with the bombing of Pan-Am flight 103 over Lockerbie in 1988. The Dutch government has ceded Camp Zeist to Britain for the trial's duration, allowing the suspects to be tried on Scottish soil under Scottish law



Libyan suspects
Abdel-Baset Ali al-Megrahi
(far left) and Al-Amin
Khalifa Fhimah



Aug 24, 1998: U.S. and Britain agree to accept trial in neutral 'third country' – the Netherlands

Dec 15: Libya endorses agreement to trial in the Netherlands

Dec 21: Tenth anniversary of Lockerbie bombing, which killed 270

Feb 12, 1999: UK offers to allow UN monitors at Scottish prison where suspects would serve time if convicted

Feb 27: U.S. and UK set one-month deadline for handover of suspects. Gaddafi argues trial should be at World Court in The Hague, not Zeist



Mar 2: Guarantees from Nelson Mandela to Gaddafi resolve deadlock

Mar 19: Mandela announces suspects to be handed over by April 6

Mar 23: UN repeats intention to suspend sanctions against Libya when suspects in custody

Apr 5: Suspects handed over to UN representative, warrants served

Apr 6: Suspects charged with murder, conspiracy to murder and contravention of aviation security act

Oct 29: Suspects formally indicted

Dec 8: Scottish judge overturns defence motion to drop charge of conspiracy to murder

Trial outline



May 3, 2000: Suspects will appear before three Scottish judges. No jury due to Libyan fears of impartiality of a Scottish jury

Burden of proof "beyond reasonable doubt" rests with Crown

No opening speeches in Scottish law. If not guilty plea is entered, trial begins with Crown's first witness

Defence may make "no case to answer" submission at end of Crown case – challenging sufficiency of evidence. If successful, accused is acquitted

Three verdicts open to judges – guilty, not guilty, and not proven. Not proven results in acquittal. If judges record one of each verdict, suspects will be acquitted

Appeal on point of law open to Crown. Defence may claim "miscarriage of justice" but must prove some evidence wrongly submitted or assessed