

Mladic "Wanted" Posters Draw Huge Response

Author: [Zoran Glavonjic](#)

Belgrade authorities hope generous reward on offer will attract potential informants. Phones have been ringing off the hook at Serbia's intelligence services this week since police put up new posters promising one million euro for information leading to the capture of Ratko Mladic.

The reward for the former Bosnian Serb military chief, which is being offered tax-free, is proof that the country is cooperating with international justice, say government officials keen to move towards further integration with the European Union.

The new posters that went up on January 11 feature Mladic along with former Croatian Serb leader Goran Hadzic. The bounty for Hadzic is 250,000 euro.

Both men are wanted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, ICTY, for crimes committed as they allegedly tried to "ethnically cleanse" parts of the former Yugoslavia of non-Serbs during the Balkan wars of the Nineties.

Intelligence service staff said they had been flooded with calls since the new campaign began.

"They call all the time," said Jovan Stojic, the chief of staff for the director of the Security Information Agency, BIA, the country's intelligence service.

He said that some calls were frivolous, while others appeared to be from supporters of the fugitives trying to throw BIA off the scent.

Yet he added that since it was impossible to tell straightaway which pieces of information were relevant, all calls were being treated carefully.

"We forward each piece of information to the department which deals with war crimes," said the security chief, adding that many of the calls seemed "really serious".

According to Stojic, in the 18 months since financial awards were first offered by the Serbian government, a number of calls had provided credible information on the whereabouts of war crimes suspects. He was not able to confirm how many of those calls had led to actual arrests.

Serbia has been under growing pressure to arrest the remaining two fugitives as soon as possible, particularly Mladic, so that he can be tried in The Hague. The tribunal has only two years until it closes down, and time is running out.

Although the country has already handed over 43 indictees to the court, the arrests of Mladic and Hadzic are demanded by European countries before it can join the EU.

Serbian interior minister Ivica Dacic said the whole country was being held hostage by the fugitives.

He said he hoped that European countries and Hague prosecutors appreciated how much was being done to find them.

“All these measures that are being taken – not just by the ministry of internal affairs, but by some other national bodies and security services as well – are indicators that Serbia is fully cooperating with The Hague and fulfilling its obligations towards the tribunal,” he said.

Military analyst Aleksandar Radic told IWPR that the new round of “wanted” posters were proof that the Serbian government is actively searching for the fugitives.

“So far, the BIA has been doing a lot in order to locate the fugitives, but the media wasn’t aware of it. However, when you display posters all over the country, then your actions become very visible,” he said.

He added that all plausible leads were being investigated, “If somebody gives you credible information on the fugitives’ whereabouts, then you cannot ignore it. It is a usual tactic in any search and it’s not being used only in Mladic’s case.”

Rasim Ljajic, the president of the National Council for Cooperation with the Hague Tribunal, this week made a public appeal for information about the suspects.

Members of the public who might be able to assist with enquiries would be doing “a favour to the whole state” if they came forward, he said.

“The gains from Mladic and Hadzic’s extradition to The Hague far outweigh the sums being offered for information leading to their arrest,” he told reporters in Belgrade.

Yet Stojic said the majority of people who called did not seem particularly interested in the money being offered.

“They don’t even ask about the reward – they just feel the need to tell us what they know,” he said.

Zoran Glavonjic is a reporter in Belgrade.

Source URL: <https://iwpr.net/global-voices/mladic-wanted-posters-draw-huge-response>