

Radovan Karadzic captured

After 13 years at large Radovan Karadzic, the ICTY's number one of all the former Yugoslavia war crime indictees has finally been captured.

The former leader of Bosnian Serbs was arrested in Belgrade, supposedly revealed by a phone call, although other scenarios have also been mentioned. There is no exact information on how and when he was captured with the whole story is veiled in secrecy.

Radovan Karadzic was in hiding for years under the fake identity of Dr. Dragan Dabic, who worked in alternative medicine. Karadzic, under his fake name contributed to newspapers, appeared in public debates on alternative medicine and even had his own internet website¹.

The international community, as well as Serbia's neighbours – especially Bosnia and Herzegovina, on whose territory the civil war broke out – all welcomed the arrest. The European Union commissioner for enlargement Olli Rehn called Karadzic's arrest a historic moment for international justice: "It is very important for the reconciliation in the Western Balkans and this arrest is a milestone in Serbia's European objectives"².

Maxime Verhagen, the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs said to the BBC that the "arrest of Karadzic is proof that Serbia is capable of solving the question of war criminals"³ and called on Belgrade to extradite the remaining two who most believe continue to be in hiding in Serbia: Ratko Mladic and Goran Hadzic.

Radovan Karadzic is charged by the international tribunal in The Hague with genocide, crimes against humanity, murder, wilful killing and grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions and others, which took place during the 1992 – 1995 war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. A Karadzic profile⁴ can be found on the Transitions Online website.

After his temporary detention in Serbia, Karadzic is expected to be extradited to The Hague shortly.

The arrest of Karadzic came only a few weeks after the capturing of Stojan Zupljanin in the Serbian town of Pancevo. Zupljanin, like Karadzic was one of the four last names sought by the ICTY. Many analysts therefore believe that this is a trend rather than coincidence in approach of the new Serbian government towards those indicted of war crimes.

Sources: B92, Transitions Online, International Crisis Group, The Observer, European Commission

¹ <http://www.dragandabic.com/>

² http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/rehn/index_en.htm

³ http://www.bbc.co.uk/serbian/news/2008/07/080722_karadzic_reax.shtml

⁴ <http://www.tol.cz/look/TOL/article.tp!?IdLanguage=1&IdPublication=4&NrIssue=279&NrSection=1&NrArticle=19791>