

7,900 PEOPLE FROM 90 COUNTRIES DEMAND ARREST OF RATKO MLADIC AND
RADOVAN KARADZIC

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Washington, DC: On the eve of the tenth anniversary of the 1995 massacre at Srebrenica, Bosnia, 7,900 people from 90 countries have called for the immediate arrest of General Ratko Mladic and Radovan Karadzic, the two Bosnian Serbs viewed as chiefly responsible for the killings.

The global campaign was launched in May with a petition on the Internet by four US-based organizations: Physicians for Human Rights, the Center for Balkan Development, The Advocacy Project, and Congress of North American Bosniaks.

The petition will be delivered on July 11 - the tenth anniversary of the massacre - to US President George Bush; General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, the NATO Secretary-General; and Lord Paddy Ashdown, the High Representative and EU Representative in Bosnia. The campaign will continue until the two men are arrested.

"The failure to capture Karadzic and Mladic has set a dangerous precedent by tolerating lawlessness, crimes against humanity, and genocide," said Leonard S. Rubenstein, executive director of Physicians for Human Rights (PHR), the Nobel Peace Prize-winning organization which conducted exhumations at four Srebrenica mass graves in 1996 and has submitted evidence to the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in the Hague.

"The continued impunity of these two men will only encourage violence against civilians in current and future conflicts, such as the ongoing genocide in Darfur."

The Bosnian war began in 1992, when the Serbian Army linked with Bosnian Serb fighters to expel non-Serbs from northern and eastern Bosnia in an effort to create an ethnically pure Serb state. Thousands of Bosniaks (Bosnian Muslim) refugees fled to Srebrenica, which finally fell on July 11, 1995 after a three-year siege. Men and boys over the age of 15 were separated and killed. The Bosnian government recently released names of 8,106 massacre victims.

"Try to read all [these] 7,000 names [of signers to the petition] and you can see what it means to kill almost 8,000 people. Serbian criminals did it just in four to five days in Srebrenica-1995. Let's try to say 'never again' again," writes one petition signer.

As President of the Bosnian Serbs during the war, Radovan Karadzic launched the campaign of "ethnic cleansing" and genocide. Ratko Mladic commanded the Bosnian Serb Army and has been placed at the scene of Srebrenica massacres by several eyewitnesses and video footage that was recently aired on Serbian television.

The two men were first indicted by the Hague Tribunal on November 16, 1995 and charged with 20 counts, including genocide and crimes against humanity. The fact that they remain at large, 10 years after their indictment, "brings shame on the international community and makes a mockery of justice," says the petition.

The four campaign organizers warn that the failure to arrest Karadzic and Mladic is hampering economic reconstruction in Eastern Bosnia and discouraging the return of Bosniak refugees to Srebrenica—two key goals of US policy. Less than 3,000 of Srebrenica's pre-war population of 29,000 Bosniaks have returned home.

Tarik Bilalbegovic, a board member of the Congress of North American Bosniaks, said that the arrest of Karadzic and Mladic would also strengthen US relations with Muslim communities worldwide. "(It) could send a strong message to Muslims that the United States is serious about punishing those responsible for the massacre of Muslim civilians," he said.

The petitioners come from 90 countries and indicate an affiliation with 430 organizations. In addition to several thousand Bosnian citizens, they include members of the European Parliament; the UN International Police Task Force (IPTF); SFOR (the Stabilization Force in the Balkans); health professionals, academics, and students.

The petition has also been signed by John Shattuck, the former US Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Labor and Human Rights for the Clinton Administration, and Ambassador Robert L. Barry, who headed the OSCE mission in Bosnia.

The arrest of Karadzic and Mladic is seen as increasingly urgent because the Hague Tribunal will cease prosecutions by 2008. Carla Del Ponte, Chief Prosecutor of the ICTY, has warned that this leaves little time to mount a complex and high profile prosecution.

Western governments appear to be responding. The US House of Representatives and Senate passed resolutions last month calling for the apprehension and trial of all persons indicted for genocide by The Hague. The Senate Resolution (134) was unopposed.

The Serbian and Bosnian Serb governments are also reacting to the pressure. The Serbian government handed over several indicted individuals to the Hague Tribunal earlier this year and the Serbian Prime Minister is expected to attend the July 11 commemoration in Srebrenica. General Mladic is reportedly being sheltered by the Serbian military.

After years of denying any complicity in the massacre, the government of the Bosnian Serb Republic recently announced the arrest of eleven individuals in connection with the massacre. Karadzic is thought to be hiding in eastern Bosnia.

- [View](#) the petition online
- [Physicians for Human Rights](#) advances the health and dignity of all people by protecting human rights. PHR's International Forensic Program exhumed mass graves and worked with families of missing persons from Srebrenica. As a

founding member of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, PHR shared the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize.

- [The Center for Balkan Development](#) provides reconstruction and humanitarian aid to the Balkans and educates the American public about the wars, reconstruction, reconciliation, and peace.
- [The Advocacy Project](#) seeks to strengthen community-based advocacy groups in conflict areas, and has worked with civil society in Srebrenica since 2000.
- [The Congress of North American Bosniaks](#) is an independent and non-profit organization advocating needs and concerns of over 350,000 Bosniak-Americans in the United States and initiated the recently adopted US House and Senate resolutions regarding the Srebrenica genocide.