

RATKO MLADIC LED THE ARMY IN THE EARLY 1990S. ACCUSED OF MASSACRES IN SREBRENICA IN 1995, HE WAS ONE OF THE MAIN TARGETS OF INTERNATIONAL SANCTIONS IN THE

1990S. HE WAS THE MAIN BOSS OF THE BOSNIAN SERB ARMY, WHICH COMMITTED ATROCITIES AGAINST MUSLIMS AND CROATS. HE WAS ACCUSED OF BEING THE ARCHITECT OF THE WAR, DIED IN 2001.

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THE WEEK AFTER HIS CAPTURE IN BELGRADE, SERBIA, RULING COURTS ARGUED THAT THE FORMER GENERAL

IN HIS FIRST COURT APPEARANCE, HE WAS "OBNOXIOUS" AND "AGGRESSIVE" THAT HE IS NOT GUILTY OF ANY

THE TRIAL OF MR. MLADIC, PROSECUTOR GENERAL

THE TRIAL OF MR. MLADIC, PROSECUTOR GENERAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT (ICC) HAS BEGUN. THE PROSECUTOR GENERAL HAS ACCUSED MR. MLADIC OF ATROCITIES SAID TO HAVE OCCURRED IN 1992 AND 1993. THE PROSECUTOR SAID THAT SERBIAN SERB UNITS CARRIED OUT A "POLICY OF ETHNIC CLEANSING" THAT COULD BE OPENED UP TO OTHERS.

THE PROSECUTOR SAID MR. MLADIC WILINGLY "JOINED SERBIAN FORCES IN THE EARLY 1990S, LEADING TO FOUR YEARS OF ETHNIC CLEANSING," WHICH INVOLVED THE DESTRUCTION OF MUSLIM VILLAGES IN BOSNIA, DRIVING THOUSANDS OF THOUSANDS OF MUSLIM AND CROAT FAMILIES TO CREATE LANDS FOR SERBS. AT THE HEIGHT OF THE BOSNIAN CAMPAIGN, FORCES UNDER MR. MLADIC'S COMMAND CONTROLLED NEARLY THREE-QUARTERS OF BOSNIA.

MR. MLADIC LISTENED IMPASSIVELY TO THE RECOUNTING OF EVENTS THAT LIE AT THE HEART OF HIS INDICTMENT ON CHARGES OF WAR CRIMES, GENOCIDE AND CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY. HE HAS REFUSED TO ENTER A FORMAL PLEA, AND WHEN THE HEARING OPENED THE COURT ENTERED A NOT GUILTY PLEA ON HIS BEHALF.

# SPOTLIGHT ON MLADIĆ: VILLAIN OR CELEBRITY?

## THE ARREST AND TRIAL OF RATKO MLADIĆ IN THE BALKAN MEDIA

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# Spotlight on Mladić: Villain or Celebrity?

**The arrest and trial of Ratko Mladić  
in the Balkan Media**

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**Marcus Tanner**

## Introduction

The life, deeds and character of Ratko Mladić cast a long shadow over three of the six republics of the former Yugoslavia. In Montenegro, Macedonia and Slovenia, he is well known, notorious perhaps, but still peripheral to their national story.

It is different in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia. In the first two of these republics, Mladić at one time had the power of life and death over tens or hundreds of thousands of people, and exercised it to the full, which is why his name is forever associated there with terror, murder and perverted nationalism.

In the case of the third republic, Serbia, the public fascination with Mladić comes from a different source. This is because, obviously, Mladić, a self-proclaimed *uber-Serb*, posed no danger to Serbs. On the contrary, at least in his own mind, all the deeds for which he now faces trial he did in the name of Serbia and the Serbian people. In condemning him, many Serbs feel the world condemns them too.

In all three republics the response to the Mladić case has one commonality; it reveals the media's radically changed function in a post-communist society. The media no longer teaches but reflects what people want to read or hear. Shorn of their old pedagogical role, each outlet must compete with its rivals for attention by being more entertaining, by offering more exclusives and by striving to get closer than any of the others to the national 'mood' on any given question. In their handling of Mladić's arrest and trial, therefore, the media in each of the three republics resembles a mirror held up to the face of each country.

The articles published in the Bosniak press in Bosnia openly invite the readers to share in a feeling of frank exultation at the long-delayed arrest of the man that they see as their nation's former tormenter-in-chief.

Of all the former Yugoslav peoples, Bosniaks suffered the most, and for longest, at the hands of troops commanded by Mladić. His name among Bosniaks is associated above all, ineradicably, with the capture of the UN 'Safe Area' of Srebrenica in eastern Bosnia in July 1995 and the subsequent execution of around 8,000 men and boys.

There is probably no adult Bosniak alive who has not seen that highly disturbing TV footage of the triumphant general, sweating in the July heat in

the conquered town, insincerely patting children on the heads and doling out words of false reassurance to their cowering mothers – women who were to be made widows by the score.

It is not surprising that the Bosniak media have followed every step of the Mladić case, from arrest to trial, most thoroughly and – to a degree – with satisfaction.

The Bosnian-Serb media have been only slightly less exhaustive, though their contrasting approach to the story - omitting almost all accounts by victims, for example - is a fresh reminder that, just as the people of Bosnia cannot agree on their present or future, they cannot agree on the past, either. Taken *in toto*, the response of the Bosnian media to the Mladić case reveals the country's essentially schizophrenic post-war character.

In their handling of the Mladić case, the Croatian media accurately reflect their own nation's perception of the general, which resembles, but also differs from, that of Bosniaks. The Croats also suffered at the hands of Mladić's troops when he commanded the 9th Corps of the Yugoslav National Army in Knin in 1991. His name there is especially associated with the massacre at Škabrnja village in 1991. Škabrnja was no Srebrenica – the 80-plus killed there were the equivalent in raw numbers to about one per cent of the fatalities in Srebrenica. It was still a gruesome massacre, however.

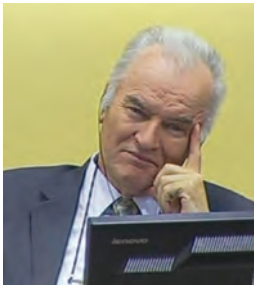
But, for whatever reason, the deeds of which Mladić is accused of committing in Croatia have not made it into The Hague tribunal indictment. As a result, there is no feeling in Croatia of justice delayed but denied. Instead, Croats feel deprived of justice as far as Mladić is concerned, and in their coverage of his arrest and trial, the media act as a barometer of the feeling of national disappointment and reproach over who is to blame. The tone of the media coverage offers part explanation for why The Hague tribunal has such a poor reputation in Croatia.

The handling of the Mladić case by the media in Serbia is in some ways hardest to dissect, because Serbian attitudes towards Mladić are less straightforward than those of Bosniaks and Croats, comprising elements of pride, embarrassment and defensiveness.

Unable to exalt him, unwilling to condemn him, the Serbian media have found a way out of this dilemma by focusing on the most trivial, sensationalist and superficial elements of the story: what Mladić ate for breakfast this morning, as opposed to what he stands accused of doing in Srebrenica in 1995.

In their unwillingness to look Mladić in the eye, the media in Serbia do their country no favours. On the contrary, they remind the world of their nation's continued reluctance to come to terms with its prominent role in the wars of the former Yugoslavia.





**Comment:**

## Mladić Arrest: A Victory for International Justice?

*By* Christian Axboe Nielsen

In 1993, at the height of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the United Nations Security Council established the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY). Two years later, after the genocide committed at Srebrenica, this tribunal indicted Ratko Mladić, the commander of the Army of Republika Srpska (VRS). For a decade and a half, Mladić eluded capture, but in May 2011 his flight from justice came to an end with his arrest near Zrenjanin in northern Serbia. Finally, Mladić was extradited to the ICTY, where he now stands trial for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

Mladić's arrest and extradition mark a stunning victory for advocates of international criminal justice. It is worth remembering that during most of the first decade of its operation the ICTY was only capable of apprehending and trying rather minor figures from the former Yugoslavia. As late as 2000, Gary Jonathan Bass in his book *Stay the Hand of Vengeance* expressed severe doubt that the ICTY would ever have the opportunity to try the main actors allegedly responsible for the mass violence inflicted upon the population of Bosnia.

This began to change in 2001, with the extradition of the former Serbian leader, Slobodan Milošević. Yet, although Milošević found himself in the dock in The Hague (in a trial that regrettably was left without conclusion because of the accused's death), the Serbian state persisted in offering safe harbour to indicted war criminals such as Mladić and the former Bosnian Serb leader, Radovan Karadžić. In Mladić's case, the investigations of the ICTY and belated inquiries by the Office of the War Crimes Prosecutor in Belgrade revealed that Mladić enjoyed the use of military facilities and staff for his personal protection until 2002. Under the presidency of Vojislav Koštunica, Serbia continued to protect Mladić. During this period, the vast majority of Serbian media outlets also persisted in portraying Mladić as a Serbian hero who did not deserve to be extradited to the despised court in The Hague. Needless to say, little was said about the crimes that Mladić had allegedly ordered or committed. Rather, these crimes were consistently denied or simply not discussed by the media.

Nevertheless, the ICTY persisted in trying dozens of high-level accused. Significantly, a number of these accused were indicted for crimes that overlapped with those mentioned in Mladić's indictment. Even more importantly, a number of top officers in the VRS, including Momir Nikolić and Dragan Obrenović, entered guilty pleas in which they delivered important information on the orders they say they received from their superiors in the VRS, including Mladić.

Still, as long as Mladić was not apprehended, a crucial piece of the puzzle seemed missing. While both Karadžić and Mladić remained fugitives from justice, and following the death of Milošević in 2006, many critics thought that the ICTY would not be able to fulfil its mission. Although the Chief Prosecutor of the ICTY, Carla Del Ponte, regularly delivered statements promising the arrest of Karadžić and Mladić, such pronouncements grew less and less convincing to a sceptical public. In particular, victim groups spoke vocally about their frustration with the fact that two of the most important accused had not been apprehended.

In addition to the public diplomacy of the Chief Prosecutor, the ICTY also kept working quietly behind the scenes to achieve the arrest of all fugitives. In close cooperation with law enforcement and intelligence agencies both in the former Yugoslavia and internationally, the Office of the Prosecutor of the ICTY persistently pushed to obtain the most recent information about the fugitives. The Chief Prosecutor reported regularly to both the UN Security Council and to the European Union. Although there was great political pressure among EU member states to drop the condition that Serbia cooperate fully with the ICTY before beginning negotiations to join the Union – in the end only the Netherlands remained firmly committed to this criterion – this conditionality was instrumental in ensuring the eventual arrest of all fugitives. Given the domestic political environment in Serbia and the long-standing lack of political will to commit to arrests, it is certain that only this conditionality ensured that Karadžić and Mladić were eventually arrested.

Karadžić was arrested in 2008, but three more years elapsed before the Serbian authorities arrested Mladić in 2011. There is nearly complete certainty that both spent the entire period since 2000 on the territory of Serbia. Only when it became clear that there was no alternative did the Serbian authorities finally arrest the most wanted fugitives and extradite them to The Hague.

There can be no doubt that the arrest of Mladić has great significance for both the former Yugoslavia and for the cause of international criminal justice. For years, Mladić's arrest had been thought impossible, and many had lost hope that this day would come. This accomplishment carries tremendous significance for victims of the war in Bosnia. The arrest also sends a powerful message that although justice may be tardy, the patience and memory of international criminal tribunals cannot be outrun. In the end, the long arm of international criminal justice succeeded in apprehending even those who thought that they enjoyed protection and impunity from the law.

At the same time, any satisfaction felt about this success must be tempered by the amount of time that has elapsed since the crimes for which Mladić was indicted were committed. And the manner in which the political elites and media of Serbia and Republika Srpska treated the arrest and extradition

of Mladić in no way conformed to international standards. Instead of using the opportunity to initiate and carry out a thorough discussion of the crimes and their political and military context, Mladić was ushered hurriedly out of Serbia. Politicians and media said little or nothing about the crimes in the indictment against Mladić. Instead they devoted much attention to trivial and sensationalist details about his long period in hiding. With a few honourable exceptions, the political leadership and law enforcement officials treated Mladić's arrest as a purely technical international obligation that had been fulfilled by Serbia. As Jelena Subotić cogently argued in *Hijacked Justice*, her analysis of Croatian and Serbian cooperation with the ICTY, Serbia succeeded in belatedly fulfilling a commitment in form, but not in spirit. Missing were the voices of the victims of the crimes in the indictment against Mladić. Missing also was any cathartic discussion of the extensive role that Serbia had played in funding the VRS throughout the war in Bosnia.

It is to be hoped that these discussions will come – and that the ICTY contributes to ensuring that their day will arrive. Until Serbia, the Republika Srpska and the rest of the region are ready to confront the full story of the mass violence that occurred during the wars of Yugoslav succession, true reconciliation will remain elusive.





## **News Survey Reveals Media Highs and Lows**

BIRN's analysis of 2,300 articles on the Mladić arrest shows news items dominated as a genre - and that coverage tailed off after the trial began

*By Selma Učanbarlić*

Between the time of Ratko Mladić's arrest on May 26, 2011 and July 15, 2012, when the first witnesses testified at his trial in The Hague, BIRN Bosnia and Herzegovina monitored reports on the subject across 42 media outlets, including print media, online media and news services.

Over this period, 2,300 articles were analysed across 12 media outlets in Bosnia, 16 in Serbia and 14 in Croatia.

News reports on the arrest dominated, as a journalistic genre. Of the total number of articles, about 1,500 of the 2,300 published items were news, followed by extended news reports, analysis and comments. As a genre, interviews were least published, around 70 in all.

Most articles were published immediately after the arrest. During the first few days, almost all media published information on the manner of the arrest, the location where Mladić had been hiding, his appearance in court and information about his health.

Following the arrest, most of the media monitored in the survey also continued to report on Mladić, providing information about his transfer to The Hague and his appearance before the ICTY judges.

They also published comment pieces, analyses and interviews regarding what the arrest itself meant for Serbia, Bosnia and the region and articles recalling the crimes for which he had been indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

Media interest tailed off after the beginning of the trial. Almost all media reported the start of the trial, but not all covered the testimonies of the first witnesses for the prosecution.

## **Bosnia and Herzegovina**

All newspapers from the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the larger of the country's two autonomous entities, published testimonies by the first witnesses for the prosecution. So did the majority of daily newspapers in Republika Srpska, Bosnia's other entity.

Unlike the media in Bosnia, media in Serbia and Croatia wrote less about the testimonies of the first witnesses in the trial.

In Croatia, *24 sata*, *Glas Slavonije*, *Slobodna Dalmacija* and *Večernji list*, covered these testimonies. *Danas*, *Kurir*, *Politika*, *Večernje novosti*, *Frankfurtske Vesti* and *Dnevnik Novi Sad* all covered them in Serbia.

Over the 14 months, the 12 media outlets monitored in Bosnia published a total of 830 news items, analyses, commentaries, reports and interviews.

Of the media analysed in Bosnia, the dailies *Dnevni Avaz* and *Glas Srpske* published most news. *Oslobođenje* published most opinion pieces.

Three weeklies in Bosnia, *Slobodna Bosna*, *Reporter* and *Dani*, reported most about Mladić after the arrest and about the beginning of the trial. *Slobodna Bosna* carried the biggest number of published articles among the weeklies.

## **Serbia**

The media in Serbia also published the majority of stories about Mladić immediately after his arrest. Of the 16 analysed dailies and online publications, *Frankfurtske Vesti* published the largest number of news items, more than 200 in all.

*Dnevnik*, from Novi Sad, and *Pregled*, which is published in Belgrade, published the least number of articles among the dailies.

Weeklies in Serbia reported significantly few stories than weeklies in Bosnia. *Akter*, *NIN*, *Pečat* and *Vreme* published the largest number of opinion pieces in the analysed period, 25 in all.

## **Croatia**

The Croatian media showed less interest in the topic than the media in Bosnia or Serbia. Over the 14 months, Croatian dailies, online publications and weeklies published just over 400 articles on the subject.

The Croatian media published most articles after the arrest of Mladić. However, the theme to which these media devoted much attention was whether Mladić would also face trial for crimes committed in Croatia.

Of seven Croatian daily newspapers and online publications reviewed, *Večernji list*, *Jutarnji list* and *24 Sata* wrote most on the subject. These media published mostly news stories and reports.

Croatian weeklies reported significantly fewer stories about Mladić than their

counterparts in Bosnia and Serbia. *Aktual*, *Globus*, *Novosti* and *Objektiv* published just more than ten articles.

### No news

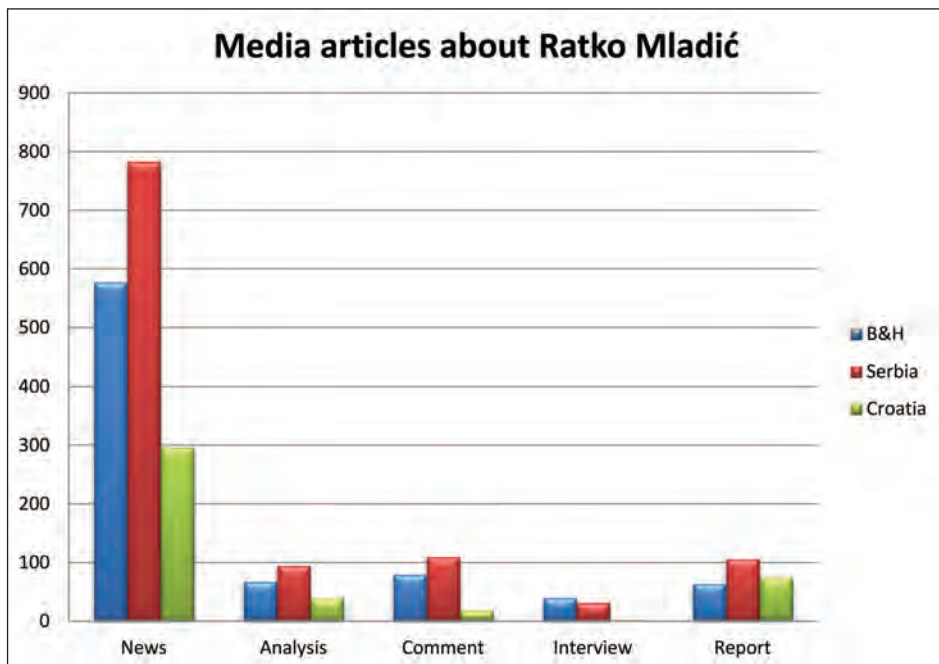
Although many dailies in Bosnia and Serbia regularly published stories about Mladić, others only did so in the period immediately following his arrest and after his first appearance before the ICTY judges. Some media outlets in Serbia did not publish any news on Mladić in the analysed period.

This was the case for *Vranjske novine*, which did not publish a single news item about Mladić.

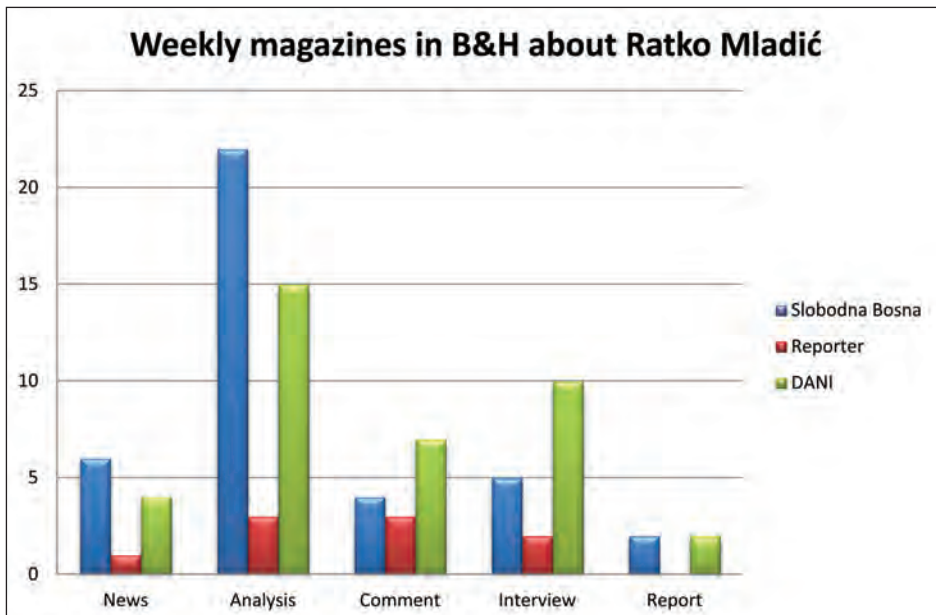
The same went for two Croatian weeklies, *Narodni list* and *Forum*, according to data collected by BIRN Bosnia and Herzegovina.

For *Euro Blic*, *Press RS (BiH)*, *24 Sata*, *Vesti* and *Dnevnik Novi Sad (Serbia)*, the archives of the portals were searched. Archives for the Croatian media: *24 Sata*, *Glas Istre*, *Glas Slavonije*, *Novi list*, *Večernji list*, *Aktual* and *Forum* were collated from online editions.

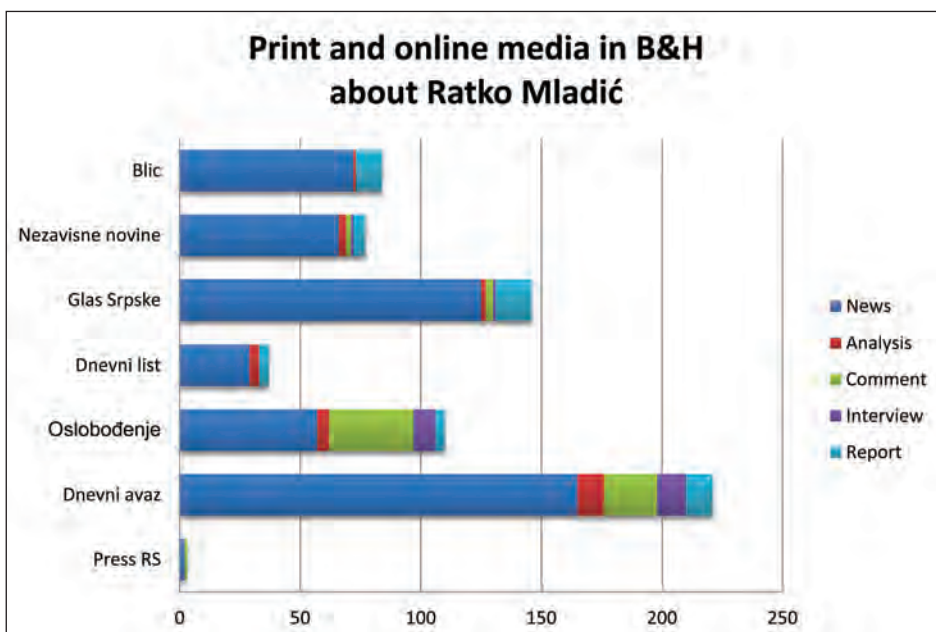
As archives for *Slobodna Dalmacija* and *Jutarnji list* are incomplete for the period from May 26 to August 16 2011, the archives of the portals of these media were reviewed. Archives of the online edition of *Aktual* are only available for 2012.



Articles published by print and online media about Ratko Mladić from May 26, 2011 to July 15, 2012.

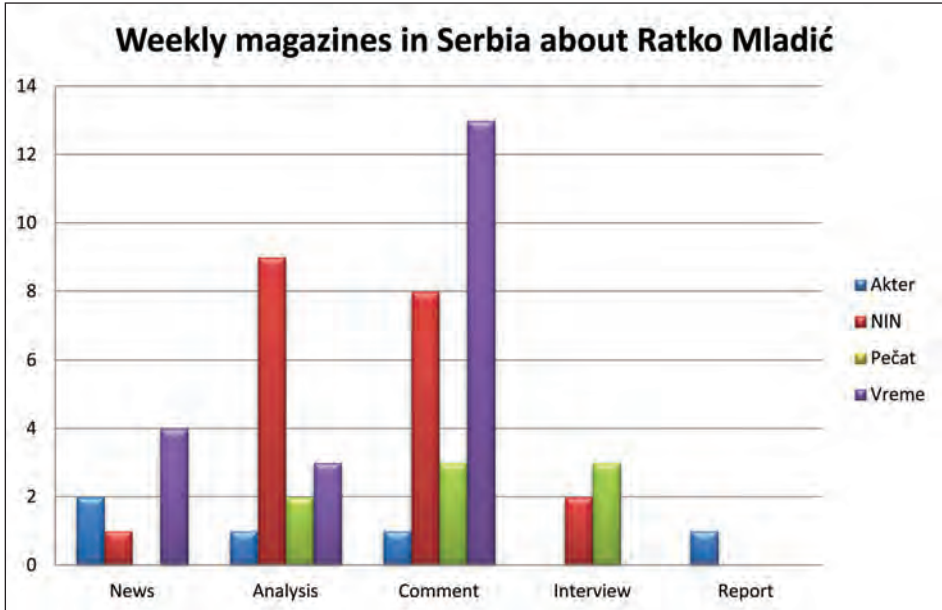


Articles published by weekly magazines in B&H from May 26, 2011 to July 15, 2012.

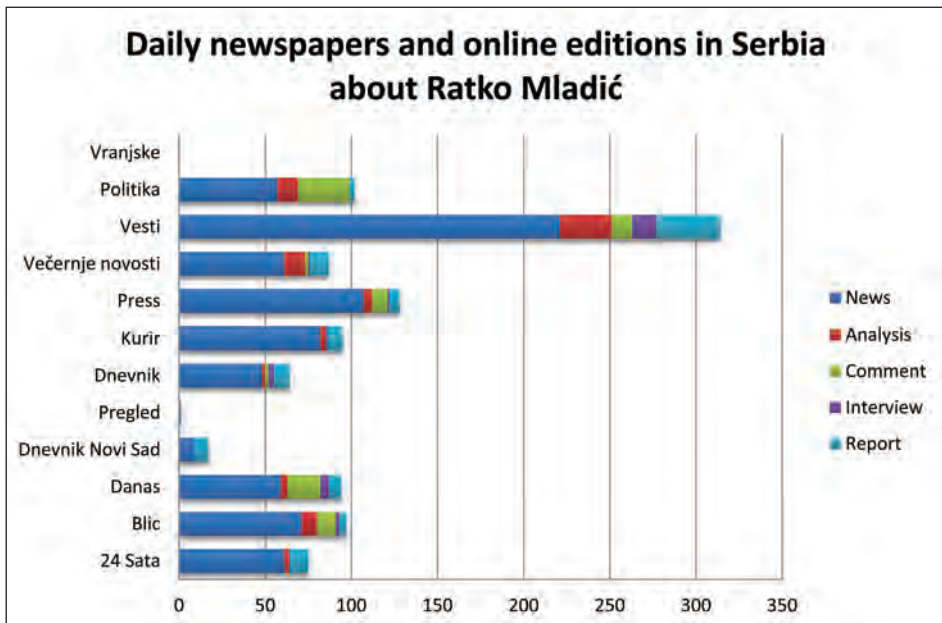


Articles published by daily newspapers and online editions in B&H about Ratko Mladić from May 26, 2011 to July 15, 2012.





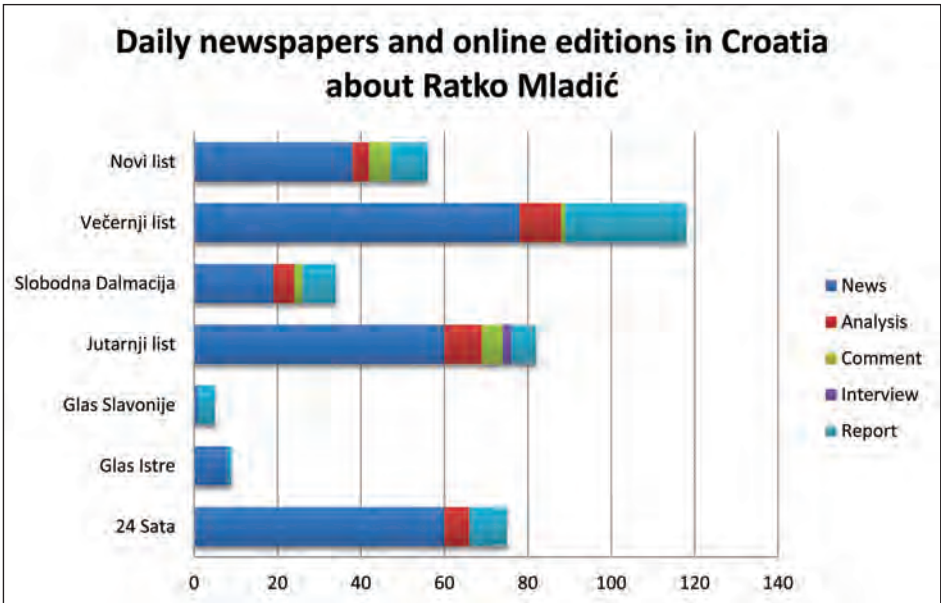
Articles published by weekly magazines in Serbia about Ratko Mladić from May 26, 2011 to July 15, 2012.



Articles published by daily newspapers and online editions in Serbia about Ratko Mladić from May 26, 2011 to July 15, 2012.



Articles published by online editions of weekly magazines in Croatia about Ratko Mladić from May 26, 2011 to July 15, 2012.



Articles published by daily newspapers and online editions in Croatia about Ratko Mladić from May 26, 2011 to July 15, 2012.



## Bosnia – Laying Bare a Nation’s Unhealed Wounds

By Erna Mačkić in Sarajevo

*The contrasting responses of Serbs and Bosniaks to the Mladić case have again exposed Bosnia’s unbridgeable divide.*

For some, the executioner was finally being brought to justice. For others, a leader was being sacrificed for pragmatic reasons. For others still, a hero of the Serbian people was being unjustly persecuted.

In ethnically divided Bosnia, the May 2011 arrest of Ratko Mladić in neighbouring Serbia split politicians and the media along familiar lines.

In both of the country’s autonomous entities, the mainly Bosniak and Croatian Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the mainly Serbian Republika Srpska, newspapers filled their front pages with statements by politicians, analysts and victims.

But while political leaders in the Federation hailed the arrest as an act of belated justice for which they had waited 16 years, the mood was decidedly different in the mainly Serb entity.

Newspapers in the Federation hurried to carry reactions from victims’ associations and recollections of how they had suffered at the hands of forces led by Mladić.

Bosnian Serb officials on the other side of the divide, spoke of the arrest as a pragmatic obligation that had to be fulfilled, however reluctantly.

Reviews of the bloody events with which Mladić’s name was associated were all but absent in the Republika Srpska, where some opposition parties went further, voicing patriotic fury and condemning the unjust sacrifice of a national hero.

Against a background of Bosnian Serb protests against the arrest in towns and cities, the headlines clearly indicated in which entity each newspaper was printed.

“Mladić is no war criminal but a hero,” was the headline in the Banja Luka *Nezavisne novine*, while the Sarajevo-based *Dnevni Avaz* went with: “Banja Luka is also with the executioner.”

At the start of his trial in The Hague, most media in both entities gave over considerable space to Mladić's health.

The print media in both entities also covered other events related to court proceedings, such as status conferences and procedural issues.

But while newspapers in the Serbian entity analysed Mladić's defence team, the media in the Federation paid less attention to such issues, some continuing to concentrate on the fury of victims concerning the man they call "butcher", "criminal", "monster" and "executioner".

### **Bosniak leaders delighted**

Reactions in Bosnia and Herzegovina were immediately reported after Serbia's then President, Boris Tadić, on May 26, 2011 confirmed Mladić's arrest in Lazarevo, in northern Serbia.

There was no doubt in the Federation entity regarding the guilt of the former commander of the Republika Srpska Army (VRS) for the crimes with which he had been charged.

Bakir Izetbegović, the Bosniak member of Bosnia's tripartite State Presidency, described the arrest as important for all victims of the military campaigns Mladić commanded and for the future of Bosnia and the region as a whole.

"Justice in this case has been too slow but inevitable," remarked this senior member of the Bosniak-led Party of Democratic Action (SDA).

Another leading politician, Zlatko Lagumdžija, head of the mainly Bosniak Social Democratic Party (SDP), hailed the event as a major step towards the fulfilment of justice for victims.

The main Croatian party, the Croatian Democratic Union of Bosnia and Herzegovina (HDZ BiH), also described the arrest as a major step for international justice.

Haris Silajdžić, Bosnia's wartime foreign minister and former leader of the Party for Bosnia and Herzegovina (SBiH), hailed the arrest as good news for the families of the victims of genocide, ethnic cleansing and other crimes.

Others were less euphoric. Željko Komšić, the Croatian member of the State Presidency, claimed that the Serbian government had "known all the time where Mladić was [hiding]".

And Fahrudin Radončić, president of the Alliance for a Better Future of Bosnia and Herzegovina (SBBBiH), was distinctly downbeat.

"Unfortunately... Srebrenica's executioner Ratko Mladić is facing justice too late," he said, describing the arrest as "first and foremost a consequence of European pressure and Serbia's interest in opening the door to Europe."

### **Serbian leaders – on the defensive**

In Republika Srpska, leaders of Milorad Dodik's ruling Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD), were temperate in their responses, interpret-

ing the arrest as an international obligation while at the same time cautioning that only a fair trial could establish whether Mladić was guilty of the crimes for which he was indicted. Crimes committed against Serbs also need investigating, they added.

Dodik, president of Republika Srpska, said all those who had committed war crimes needed to answer for them.

"The institutions of the Republika Srpska have never stood... in defence of anyone who committed war crimes, regardless of their religion or nationality," Dodik said, adding that he hoped that politicians and generals of the Bosniak-led Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina would also be made to answer for crimes against Serbs.

Igor Radojičić, president of the entity's Assembly, also from the SNSD, said he hoped that the trial would "provide an opportunity to present a number of facts from the previous war, and that it will be organised in a fair and impartial manner".

Nebojša Radmanović, the Serbian member of Bosnia's State Presidency, also from the SNSD, said the arrest marked the fulfilment of international obligations towards The Hague tribunal.

"We appeal to all those in Bosnia and Herzegovina, who, for calculated or any other reasons, prevented or hindered the prosecution of indictees for war crimes in the previous war against members of any nations, to stop this immediately and unconditionally," he added.

Ten days after the arrest, Radmanović told Radio and Television of Republika Srpska that the arrest had been an emotional experience for Serbs who saw him primarily as a soldier and commander.

"Personally, I belong to all these people who feel and experience the arrest of General Mladić in this way, but political reality is completely different and politicians cannot rely on emotions," he said.

Petar Đokić, leader of the Socialist Party in the entity, said that the arrest might not please those who had fought for Serbian freedom, but the court in The Hague was a reality that could not be ignored.

Mladen Bosić, president of the opposition Serbian Democratic Party (SDS), which governed the Serbian entity during the war - several of whose former leaders, such as Radovan Karadžić, Biljana Plavšić and Momčilo Krajišnik, later ended up in The Hague - said the arrest was to be deplored.

"The Serbian authorities had previously proved their willingness to do whatever The Hague tribunal requested," he complained.

"They handed over the complete military and political leadership of the Serbs," he said, adding: "The euphoria that this event has aroused in Sarajevo worries me."

Mladen Blagojević, president of the Serbian Radical Party Dr Vojislav Šešelj, whose leader, Šešelj, is currently on trial in The Hague, said that a fair trial was the least likely outcome.

"It is clear that Mladić will face injustice in The Hague and will not have a fair trial because this tribunal never afforded such a thing to a single Serb," he said.

"In The Hague, Mladić will have no opportunity to tell the truth about Srebrenica, nor will he have an adequate defence, as lawyers will be forced on him by The Hague tribunal," he added.

### **Federation media – focusing on victims**

Generally, Bosniak victims and survivors of Mladić-led military actions were less euphoric about the arrest than their political representatives – and this coolness was reflected in the reactions published by the media in the Federation.

Many declared that the arrest had come too late because Mladić was now sick and old. For all that, they hoped that he would live to face justice.

Many of those interviewed were survivors of the Srebrenica massacre of July 1995, who recalled the appalling events they had experienced.

Reactions also came from victims of the war in Sarajevo, Prijedor, Sanski Most, Foča, in eastern Bosnia, and from other areas where crimes for which Mladić has been indicted took place.

Haris Halilović, who was born in Srebrenica and lost several members of his family in 1995, when the Republika Srpska Army under Mladić overran the town, wrote in the weekly *Dani* that he had learned of the arrest on the other side of the world in Australia.

"That name, that face, these images and these infamous words that Mladić said 16 years ago were too long associated with the tragedy of my family for us ever to associate it with anything cheerful - even in the context of the arrest of the creator of this tragedy," he wrote in the magazine's June 17, 2011 edition.

Mevludin Orić, from Srebrenica, recalled for *Dnevni avaz* on June 4, 2011, that he had been one of four survivors of a mass shooting in Orahovac, in the Municipality of Zvornik in eastern Bosnia, in July 1995. "After Mladić left, they started to execute us," Orić said.

Senad Hasanović, chairman of the board of the football club Jadar, told the June 6, 2011 edition of the daily *Oslobođenje* that it was not easy for the team to play in the stadium at Nova Kasaba, in Bratunac Municipality, where a massacre of Bosniaks had taken place in 1995.

"In 1995, that stadium was full of people who were later taken to the scaffold and executed," he was reported as saying.

"That remains in our memory and we will never forget it. We will try to convey that to young people, so they don't forget it either," he said.

In most cases, journalists whose media outlets had their head offices in the Federation closely followed Mladić's plea and the opening of his trial on May 16, 2012.

"We urge The Hague tribunal that the trial of Ratko Mladić be fair, quick and efficient, so that all victims of the war may welcome the verdict," Fikret Grabovica, president of the Parents of Children Killed in Besieged Sarajevo association was quoted as saying in *Dnevni list*, on July 4, 2011.

The weekly *Slobodna Bosna*, in its May 17, 2011 edition, covered the presence at the start of the trial of Jasmina Mujkanović, from Prijedor, who lost her father in the Bosnian Serb-run detention camp at Omarska.

"I am glad to see him there in the accused's chair," the newspaper reported her as saying. "I am pleased to be here today, and that he saw me and all of us who survived," she added.

*Dnevni avaz* carried the reactions of victims from a rally held in Sarajevo on the occasion of a hearing at which Mladić appeared.

"The executioner laughed when he was killing our children.... You got what you deserve, butcher ... Why doesn't he clearly admit that he is guilty?" *Dnevni avaz*, in its edition of July 5, 2011, reported some of the protesters as shouting: "He learned to be strong with an army and weapons, why isn't he brave now?"

### **Republika Srpska media - focusing on Mladić's defence**

The print media in the Republika Srpska ignored such statements, or kept them to a minimum, paying more attention to the problems of appointing a lawyer, preparing Mladić's defence, the conditions for the trial and suchlike.

The weekly *Reporter*, based in Republika Srpska, in its July 13, 2011 edition, analysed how Mladić might defend himself and who his lawyers might be. "For now, it is most likely that Mladić will not defend himself as his health does not allow it," it observed.

"As one might have noticed at his last appearance in The Hague courtroom, the judges are not at all fond of him, and it seems that Mladić himself has no difficulty in being provoked, even from the gallery, where representatives from several associations of Bosniak victims from Srebrenica were sitting," it added.

The print media in the Republika Srpska also gave over space to former colleagues and friends of the arrested general who believe in his innocence.

Rajko Petrov Nogo, Serbian poet and essayist, told *Nezavisne novine* in its June 6, 2011 edition, that the arrest marked "the punch-line of decades of Serbian humiliation. It is the humiliation of the whole nation."

What was common to all media was sensational interest in the health of the general, who was said to be suffering from various diseases, from water in the lungs and lymph node tumours to the consequences of a stroke.

In reporting the arrest of Mladić, and the rest of the court proceedings in The Hague, the media response illustrated the depth of the country's ethnic divisions, once again revealing that the scars of the 1992 war remain unhealed.

### **Indictment changed four times**

In 1995, Ratko Mladić, former chief of staff of the Army of Republika Srpska (VRS), was indicted by the Office of the Prosecution of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia for acts of genocide, crimes against humanity, violations of the laws and customs of war, and of taking international staff as hostages between 1992 and 1995.

The indictment against Mladić was changed four times. The last change in December 2011 cut the number of charges from 186 to 106. The number of Municipalities in which the crimes were allegedly committed also fell from 23 to 15.

After disrupting the trial session, Mladić was found in contempt of court and dismissed from the hearing when he was supposed to deliver his plea, after which Judge Alphons Orié noted a plea of not guilty. Mladić's trial started on May 16, 2012.

### **'He wouldn't hurt a fly'**

"A nice man, naturally intelligent, the best scholar and attendant of the military academy, a man who would not hurt a fly, a Serbian hero, an honourable soldier, a protector of Muslims"; that is how the inhabitants of the village of Božanović, near Kalinovik, have described Mladić."

(Description of Mladić, *Nezavisne novine*, May 28/29, 2011).

### **'A criminal seeking attention'**

"The criminal loves attention and wants to give an impression about who's the boss. He knows the mentality of people very well and plays on the fact that we are merciful, even towards felons. He does not want to give the impression of a wretch. He thinks he did everything according to the law. He is someone who wants to kill."

(Profile of Mladić, *Dnevni avaz*, June 4, 2011).

### **'A human zero'**

"In fact, he is a zero of a man. God punished him, but still did not punish him enough. His punishment would be to never die. I want that curse to reach him, in Bosnian, Serbian and Croatian, because during three years of the Srebrenica siege we were dying in the town from his shells. And that is being slowly forgotten."

(Victim of Srebrenica, *Slobodna Bosna*, May 27, 2011)





## **Serbia – Turning Horror Into Showbiz**

The superficial treatment of Mladić's arrest and trial is a testament to the country's unwillingness to face up to its past

*By Marija Ristić in Belgrade*

"A giant step towards the European Union!"; "Strawberries and Tolstoy for Mladić!"; "He survived three heart attacks!"

Such were the sensationalist media headlines that followed Serbia's arrest of Ratko Mladić, former commander of the Republika Srpska Army (VRS), in May 2011.

Newspapers filled their front pages with reports from the village where he was arrested - Lazarevac in Vojvodina - with the reactions of villagers, speculation about who first knew of the arrest and reports of what Mladić told the Special Court while awaiting transfer to the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

Victims of the crimes he is alleged to have committed stayed in the shadows, and serious analysis of the crimes for which the ICTY had indicted Mladić was notable by its absence.

Reporting at the beginning of the trial in May 2012 continued in the same vein. This time, the focus was on his neighbours in The Hague detention unit, and whether he was being taken good care of.

Opinion is divided among media analysts as to why Serbia's media reacted to the arrest in such a sensationalist manner, treating Mladić more as a show-business star than as a man accused of some of the gravest crimes in modern history.

While some say the media merely wanted to boost circulation figures, others see the reaction as an accurate reflection of a society that is still not prepared to face up to its past.

The ICTY indictment against Mladić, issued on July 25, 1995, charged him with genocide, persecution, extermination, murder, deportations, inhumane acts, terror, unlawful attacks and taking hostages during the 1992-95 war in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

For all its focus on trivia, the media reaction suggested that the aura around Mladić as a Serbian war hero had faded.

While debate about Serbia's moral responsibility to extradite a man indicted of the gravest of crimes was absent, there was no repeat of the public demonstrations that took place in July 2008, when the police arrested Radovan Karadžić, the former president of Republika Srpska.

For the politicians whose statements the media covered, Mladić's arrest meant only one thing: Serbia had removed an important obstacle on its path towards joining the European Union.

Mladić's extradition to The Hague, along with the arrest of Goran Hadžić, the former Croatian Serb leader, was a formal requirement of the European Union for Serbia to continue its accession process, and possibly gain candidate status. This duly occurred in March 2012.

### **Well hidden in Serbia**

Finding the ICTY's most wanted fugitive just one hundred kilometres from the Serbian capital ended the speculation about where Mladić had been hiding for 16 years.

Although the authorities had claimed on countless occasions that he was not in Serbia, the arrest revealed that the country had, in fact, long been his safe haven.

The trials of those who harboured and shielded him, which began in 2009 and are on-going, showed that Mladić, two years after the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement in 1995, had moved from the Bosnian Serb entity, Republika Srpska, to Belgrade, together with a group of senior Bosnian Serb officers.

That year, at the request of Slobodan Milošević, the then Yugoslav president, the so-called 30th Personnel Centre was formed by decree of the Yugoslav Army General, Momčilo Perišić.

This mostly consisted of former members of the Bosnian Serb army, tasked with taking care of Mladić.

Mladić moved freely about Belgrade until April 2002, when the Serbian Parliament adopted a law on cooperation with the ICTY. According to the Serbian War Crimes Prosecutor's Office, Mladić hid in a variety of locations in Belgrade until 2006, when all trace of him was lost.

Numerous attempts to arrest him followed several warnings from Serge Brammertz, the ICTY chief prosecutor, that the tribunal's most wanted fugitive was in Serbia. Mladić was finally arrested by Serbian security services on May 26, 2011.

The news was first carried by the Croatian media and then by the media in Serbia, before Serbia's then President, Boris Tadić, confirmed the arrest that day around noon.

But up until then, both the Serbian government and Chief War Crimes Prosecutor Vladimir Vukčević had continued to claim that Mladić was not in

Serbia, assuring both the domestic and international public that ICTY claims were unfounded.

Until today, the Serbian media have offered no explanation as to how, and with whose assistance, Mladić stayed out of the public gaze in the years preceding his arrest.

The weekly magazine Vreme was the only paper to ask how Mladić, by then in ill-health, managed to treat his ailments yet remain in hiding.

"If he suffers from hypertension, how did he obtain his medicine? If he had several strokes, how come he was not in hospital?" Vreme asked in one of their editorials on May 31, five days after Mladić's arrest.

"If he suffered three strokes, how come he worked on building sites digging paths for pipes?" it continued.

"If he is a kidney patient, did his attacks require emergency medical intervention? If Ratko Mladić is really sick, as has been said, who helped him to keep things under control?"

### **Ticket to Europe**

During their visits to Serbia, EU officials regularly pointed out that Serbia could only hope to obtain candidate status once both Mladić and Goran Hadžić were on trial at The Hague.

Hence the official euphoria over potential membership of the EU when Mladić was arrested and extradited, which then spilled over into the media.

The voices of human rights activists who pleaded for the indictment, the war crimes and the victims to remain the key focus, went unheeded.

President Tadić's first reaction, typically, was to announce that Serbia's road to the EU was now open.

"We have opened the door to obtaining candidate status, the start of [membership] negotiations and finally to EU membership," he declared immediately after Mladić's arrest.

Now Serbia had the right "to ask the EU to fulfil its part. We fulfilled our part and we will continue to do so," the president added.

Vuk Drašković, head of the Serbian Renewal Movement, continued likewise, describing the arrest as "the liberation of Serbia."

"The doors are wide open to the European and democratic future of our state and nation," he said.

Political analyst Dejan Vuk Stanković also described the arrest as "a positive step for the EU accession of Serbia", in the pages of *Večernje novosti* on May 27.

"I have no doubt that Serbia will soon get candidate status and the date for a start to [membership] negotiations," Sonja Licht, president of the Fund for Political Excellence, told the same newspaper. "It is certain that Mr Brammertz will have to write a new report."

Dragan Bujošević, editor-in-chief of the daily *Politika*, in a piece published on May 27, conducted no retrospective of the crimes attributed to Mladić but instead opined that the arrest gave Serbia a moral right to demand favours in return.

"With the moral credit of the arrests of Ratko Mladić and Radovan Karadžić, Serbia has the right to look into everyone's eyes and ask for an investigation of the crimes committed against Serbs in all the wars of the nineties," he wrote.

"With the arrest of Mladić, Serbia has reaffirmed that it is entitled to raise the question of Dobrovoljačka Street, of [Operation] 'Oluja' and of the 'Žuta kuća,'" Bujošević wrote, referring to the killings of Yugoslav National Army soldiers in Sarajevo in 1992, the Croatian Army's "Operation Storm" against rebel Serbs in the breakaway Krajina region in 1995 and to the site of alleged organ harvesting from Serbs during the Kosovo war in 1999.

Tomislav Nikolić, then leader of the opposition Serbian Progressive Party and the current Serbian president, went further, remarking that ordinary Serbs had never viewed Mladić as a criminal in the first place.

"This is a matter of a man who is wanted by The Hague tribunal for war crimes, but in Serbia they never succeeded in convincing us he was a [suspected] criminal and felon," Nikolić said after the arrest.

Dragan Šutanovac, vice-president of Serbia's Democratic Party, responded that such a reaction showed that "although he had changed his rhetoric, he [Nikolić] had never abandoned the ideology of the [Serbian ultra-nationalist] Radical Party and his mentor, Vojislav Šešelj."

This referred to the fact that Nikolić had formerly been a leading light in the Radical Party, led by Šešelj, before leaving to found the more moderate Serbian Progressive Party.

Commenting on the media reports, Nataša Kandić, director of the Humanitarian Law Center, an NGO based in Belgrade, said that these and other official responses to the arrest showed that meaningful and serious debate on what was really happening before the ICTY was sadly lacking.

"However, what is important, comparing this with when Karadžić was arrested, is that we did not have the protests," she added.

"After all this time, people simply do not care, they are saturated, and they are not interested in Mladić any longer."

## **Hunt for exclusives**

Media critic Dragan Ilić, commenting on the arrest, notes that the media competed to find the best "unnamed" source, to be the first to get to Mladić's house and to film the yard, the neighbours, members of the family and appearances at the Special Court.

"The opening credits were read by the president at a special press conference and then the circus began," he recalled.

"There were breaking news reports that Mladić had drunk his medication [and had issued a] list of demands, including copies of Russian classic

books, strawberries, a TV set and the psychiatric expertise of Slavica Đukić-Dejanović.

"Primacy was given to such an amount of trivial topics and details that all this tension amounted to a soap opera," he continued.

Rade Veljanovski, professor of political sciences at Belgrade University, says the Serbian media behaved much the same way when Karadžić was arrested in July 2008.

"Instead of the focus being on what Mladić had done in the nineties and the grounds on which he was indicted, the media focused on information such as his appearance or health," Veljanovski noted.

He said one of the main factors behind the sensationalist approach was the media's need to boost circulation figures and so earn money.

This is supported by the fact that the daily *Blic*, the day after the arrest, published news that the newspaper had sold its entire previous day's edition in record time.

Another daily, the tabloid *Kurir*, even linked the arrest of Mladić to a rise in share values on the Belgrade Stock Exchange.

"Brokers associate the jump in the value of shares in NIS [Naftna Industrija Srbije] with the arrest ... and advise people not to sell, because they [the shares] will soon be worth more," the newspaper wrote on May 29.

The traditional division between the so-called serious press and the tabloids melted away when it came to the Mladić's arrest, as comparative analysis of the articles in the tabloid *Blic* and the serious *Politika* indicates.

*Blic* compared the arrest of Mladić to the action of U.S. security forces when killing Osama bin Laden.

"The Security Information Agency's action in arresting Ratko Mladić, the most wanted war crimes suspect to be indicted by the ICTY, was carried out on the same principle that American security forces applied during their intrusion into the shelter of the Al Qaeda leader, Osama bin Laden, in early May," *Blic* claimed, citing sources in the Security Information Agency (BIA).

The police's failure to divulge details about the arrest meanwhile gave the media more space to indulge in its own speculation about how the arrest occurred.

*Blic* wrote that "the wartime leader of the Serbs greeted the BIA with cheese and ham," that he did not resist arrest and that he drank homemade brandy with police officers "to invigorate themselves before setting off."

In the hunt for an exclusive story, *Blic* called former Republika Srpska president, Radovan Karadžić, who told them that he was "very sorry and that he expects that they will cooperate in order to reveal the truth about what happened in Bosnia."

Under the headline: "We are disgusted that Serbs are rejoicing," the same newspaper carried a sympathetic report from Mladić's birthplace in Bosnia, publishing quotes from his relatives.

"I expected everything from these traitors to the Serbian people, this as well, unfortunately," one was quoted as saying.

On the other hand, *Blic* was one of the few newspapers to carry a story from Srebrenica, in eastern Bosnia, where more than 7,000 Bosniaks were killed in a military operation led by Mladić in 1995.

But for the most part, the health of the suspected war criminal was a more important story than the indictment or the reaction of victims.

Anonymous sources "close to the investigation" were often cited as sources for *Blic's* many articles on Mladić's health.

One detailed that "because of a stroke Mladić cannot move an arm, is decrepit, has lost weight and can hardly move. According to our interlocutor, Mladić also has kidney problems."

Articles of a similarly sensationalist tone could also be found in the highbrow *Politika*, Serbia's oldest daily newspaper.

In one, entitled, "He lived in a humid room; he did not turn on the lights," the newspaper imagined how Mladić had lived before his arrest, adding bizarre new details such as the layout of the house where he had been hiding.

"So they say, the gate of the house, which was built in 1965, was always locked," *Politika* mused.

*Politika* also published what Mladić had eaten for breakfast and noted that, shortly before his arrest, "he was baking pizza, which was a bit thick."

"He ate butter and jam for breakfast, hake and mashed potatoes for lunch, and chicken with boiled vegetables for dinner. All this was prescribed to him by a nutritionist," one article said.

According to Kandić: "The media wrote about what he ate, how he looked and what he said ... [but] it is interesting that no one published the indictment against Mladić. They did not write about what is in the indictment, what crimes are in question."

### **Prosecutor fuelled trivia**

Kandić partly blames Serbia's War Crimes Prosecutor's Office for the sensationalist and trivial tone of the media coverage.

"I was very angry at the prosecution and at Bruno Vekarić, the prosecution spokesman, who gave many senseless and reckless statements about what Mladić said when they met, what he wanted and what he looked like," Kandić said.

For example, Vekarić told the daily *Večernje novosti* on May 27, 2011, that Mladić "looks like himself except that he is a little thinner. As in the nineties, he had the need to broadly talk about everything. He represented his known views and was often straightforward to me."

"When we finished the formal part of the conversation, I asked him whether he was watching television, and he said that he was. He even made com-

ments regarding appearances of the prosecutor, Vladimir Vukčević. That was interesting to me."

The next day, *Novosti* continued to write about the relationship between Vekarić and Mladić: "In an informal chat, he asked to visit the grave of his daughter Ana. He did not get an answer. He also asked someone to bring strawberries to his cell," the newspaper reported.

"Vekarić said he personally would do it. Sometime later, the wartime commander of the Bosnian Serbs said that he would also like to watch the television and Vekarić has offered to lend him his TV set from the office," it added.

Analytical articles about the Mladić case could only be read in the daily newspaper *Danas* and in *Vreme*. These alone contained critical reflections on the media coverage of the arrest and carried the reactions of relevant international and domestic experts.

In a column published immediately after Mladić's arrest, Miloš Vasić of *Vreme* said that the key question in relation to the Mladić story is the question about why Mladić was so important to all of them, to both the "new" and "old" government, the security structures and to those who had hidden him.

"As we see it today, on the mythological level, they had to save and preserve the bankrupt project of Milošević and his fascist helpers," Vasić concluded.

#### **Kurir headlines:**

*"The Croats eavesdrop on Brammertz!"; "Congratulations, you've found me!"; "Bury me next to my daughter!"; "Mladić quarrels with the TV!"; "Mladić saved me from death!"; "Sloba is to blame for everything!"; "Šešelj: Ratko, say what is needed!"; "Serbia looks EU in the eyes"; "What else do they want from us?"*

#### **Mladić's menu, in Kurir, May 30, 2011**

"He ate this yesterday. According to the recommendation of the doctors, everything is unsalted:

Breakfast: Egg, melted cheese and tea

Lunch: Soup, peas and chicken

Dinner: Chicken with potatoes."







## **Croatia - Forgotten Crimes Leave Bitter Aftertaste**

In spite of the acquittal of General Gotovina, the omission of crimes committed in Croatia from the Mladić indictment is a blot on the tribunal's record in the country

*By Boris Pavelić in Zagreb*

When the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), failed to indict Ratko Mladić for war crimes in Croatia, choosing instead to focus exclusively on events in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the omission further undermined the already tarnished reputation of the international court in Croatia.

Admittedly, since the court in November 2012 - to the surprise of many - acquitted the two Croatian generals, Ante Gotovina and Mladen Markač, its reputation has been partly restored in Croatian eyes. In first-instance verdicts issued in 2011, the court jailed Gotovina and Markač for 24 and 18 years respectively, so the dramatic overturning of the verdicts was met with euphoria in Croatia.

However, concerning the matter of Ratko Mladić, following his arrest, Croats expected the tribunal to expand the indictment to include crimes committed in Croatia, especially the 1991 mass murder in Škrabnja, Dalmatia, where 84 civilians and prisoners of war perished.

The number of fatalities in Škrabnja made it the second gravest crime committed by Serbian forces during the war in Croatia after the killing of more than 200 prisoners in Ovčara, near Vukovar, on November 20, 1991.

Court proceedings launched in Croatia against Mladić for this and other alleged crimes were never concluded.

This is because, at the request of the international community, Croatia suspended conducting trials for war crimes in absentia. Zagreb did so in order to adjust its judicial procedures to EU standards after the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) lost the parliamentary election in 2000.

It was also widely believed that The Hague tribunal would assume the responsibility of hearing these cases during Mladić's trial.

Therefore, both the public and the government reacted angrily when Serge Brammertz, the ICTY's chief prosecutor, confirmed on June 1, 2011 that the tribunal prosecution did not intend to expand the indictment to cover Croatia.

Croatian political parties blamed each other for this omission, while the victims of war accused the entire political class of incompetence and disregard for their suffering. "It is unfortunate that Ratko Mladić will not be sentenced [for war crimes committed in Croatia] and that Croatia was not in the indictment at all," Marko Miljanić, a wartime commander of Croatian troops in Škabrnja, said on May 16, 2012, just one day after the Mladić trial started in The Hague.

## **Grave crimes**

Mladić's name is linked to the most serious war crimes Serbian forces and the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) committed in southern and central Croatia between 1991 and 1992.

From June 1991 to May 12, 1992, Mladić commanded the JNA's 9th Corps in Knin, then the political centre of a Croatian-Serb rebellion against the government in Zagreb.

Much of the worst fighting between Croatian and Serbian forces during the war in Croatia took place during that period, from mid-1991 onwards.

In July 1992, a district court in the city of Šibenik found Mladić and six others guilty of war crimes in the Šibenik area and in Knin and Sinj, two towns in the hinterland of Šibenik and Split. Mladić was sentenced to 20 years in prison in absentia.

Mladić was sentenced in connection to the August 1991 attack on Kijevo and surrounding villages, the August to November 1991 assault on Sinj and surrounding villages, the August 1991 attack on Vrlika, the September 1991 attack on Maljkovo, Potravlje, Šatric and Dabar, the September to October 1991 attack on Sinj and the September 1991 assault on the Šibenik area.

Three years later, in December 1995, the county attorney in the city of Split indicted Mladić and three others for attempting to blow up the hydroelectric power plant at Peruča near Sinj.

According to the indictment: "From September 1991 until January 1993 they planned, and in January 1993 organised, the destruction of the dam and hydroelectric power plant at Peruča, with the aim of completely flooding civilian and economic facilities, thus endangering the population residing downstream from the dam and the river Cetina in Sinj, Trilj and Omiš."

In 1991 and 1992, the JNA laid explosives in the foundations of the dam at the hydroelectric power plant and detonated them in January 1993.

The dam was damaged but not destroyed. Therefore, the reservoir at Peruča did not overflow and the potentially catastrophic flooding of settlements downstream from the power plant was narrowly averted.

The charges relating to the Peruča dam never resulted in a court verdict because, as previously mentioned, by this time Croatia had stopped holding war crimes trials in absentia.

Under Mladić's command, Serbian paramilitary forces and the JNA captured Škabrnja village on November 18, 1991, and killed 58 Croat civilians and 26 members of the Croatian military.

In 1994, the Croatian judiciary indicted 26 people for the Škabrnja killings. Two direct participants, Zorana Banić and Jovan Badžoka, were arrested and jailed, while the others were sentenced in absentia. Zorana Banić was arrested in 2001 in Switzerland and served a four-year prison sentence. Jovan Badžoka was arrested in 1995 and was subsequently sentenced to ten years in prison.

However, those who commanded the attack on Škabrnja never faced trial.

In February 2005, the county attorney in Zadar requested that two separate investigations be carried out into Mladić's alleged role in the deaths of civilians and soldiers in Škabrnja and for artillery attacks on Zadar and its surroundings.

This investigation did not result in an indictment, again partly because of the decision to stop holding trials for war crimes in absentia.

Expecting that Mladić's responsibility for the crimes committed in Škabrnja would be taken on by The Hague tribunal, the State Attorney, DORH, in 1993 submitted copies of the case under the number T04/HRV - 0504, through the Croatian state's Office for Cooperation with the International Court and International Criminal Courts.

Optimism that the ICTY would also try Mladić for crimes committed on Croatian soil increased following his arrest in Serbia in May 2011.

On the day of the arrest, May 26, 2011, Serge Brammertz, the ICTY's chief prosecutor, attended the annual conference of prosecutors from the former Yugoslavia on the Croatian island of Brijuni.

A day later, Croatian newspaper headlines proclaimed that The Hague would "also indict Mladić for crimes in Croatia"

Such headlines were based on one paragraph from a report published by the Croatian News Agency, Hina, about the meeting on Brijuni. Quoting Brammertz, the news report read: "A few months ago, my office presented an amendment to extend the indictment to the judges for review. Now, we are awaiting completion of the investigation in Belgrade and when Mladić is in The Hague, we will definitely consider the possibility of extending the indictment."

Based on this paragraph, the public believed that Mladić would now be made to answer for the crimes committed by the forces he led in Croatia. The announcement was also hailed by top officials in the Croatian government. On June 28, two days after Brammertz's reported statement on Brijuni, Jadranka Kosor, the prime minister, said she "welcomed the announcement of Serge Brammertz... regarding an extension of the indictment against Ratko Mladić for crimes in Croatia."

"This is our request as well. We will also take some steps in this regard and we really expect it to happen," Kosor added.

President Ivo Josipović also expressed the hope that Mladić would be indicted for crimes committed in Croatia.

"Just remember the horrible crime in Škabrnja," he said. "I think there will be good will from the [ICTY] prosecutor's side for this."

But, on June 1 just four days after Mladić's arrest, Brammertz dashed those hopes.

At a press conference in The Hague, where he announced that Mladić was now in custody, Hina news agency quoted Brammertz as saying that his office "does not intend to expand the indictment against Mladić for atrocities in Croatia, including the massacre in Škabrnja."

## **Public anger**

The subsequent wave of anger gave some Croatian politicians a fresh opportunity to further undermine the ICTY's reputation.

HDZ officials blazed the trail here, unsurprisingly, considering the HDZ ruled Croatia during the war, and the ICTY had prosecuted individuals for war crimes committed by Croat forces during the HDZ era.

Ivan Jarnjak, wartime interior minister and former vice-president of the HDZ, said Mladić's trial at The Hague would be "incomplete" if the indictment did not include crimes committed in Croatia.

"They are excusing him from some of the crimes that he [allegedly] committed, which means that, in Brammertz's opinion, we Croats are an inferior nation," he asserted on June 2.

"What Mladić [stands accused of doing] in the hinterland of Zadar and Šibenik, that is nothing, while they declare our liberation of our own territory as a joint criminal enterprise," Jarnjak added, referring to ICTY trials held in connection to Operation Oluja, (Storm), the 1995 army operation that crushed the newly-formed breakaway Serbian statelet - the Republic of Serbian Krajina (the RSK).

A disappointed Kosor announced on June 4 that she would "insist" on the expansion of the Mladić indictment.

Croatia would "send all collated documentation with a request that the ICTY's chief prosecutor expand the indictment to Croatia," Kosor announced on Croatian television.

The government adopted this position on June 9, with Prime Minister Kosor remarking that it was disturbing "to recall the horrors and the massacre committed in Škabrnja and all the families from the Zadar area that are forever dressed in black."

The State Attorney's Office responded to this by noting that it had already sent all the material gathered against Mladić to The Hague in 2003, via the Office for Cooperation with The Hague tribunal.

Meanwhile, the centre-left opposition, led by the Social Democratic Party (SDP) was forced to defend itself against HDZ accusations that it had failed to ensure Mladić was sentenced during its time in office from 2000 to 2003. The HDZ levied these accusations against the former SDP government, de-

spite the fact it was fully aware that Croatia had stopped holding war crime trials in absentia, at the request of the international community.

Ingrid Antičević-Marinović, an SDP parliamentarian from Zadar and a former justice minister, told the newspaper *Vjesnik* on June 2: "Today, it is easy to say we should have done it [but]...One needs to recall that in line with EU standards... we pledged not to hold trials in absentia."

"Had we sentenced Mladić in absentia earlier, he could have got a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison, the maximum sentence at the time when he committed the crimes, while in The Hague, he could get 40 or 60 years or a life sentence," Antičević-Marinović added.

"It was necessary to weigh these two options, holding a trial in absentia or waiting for The Hague, and that was a choice between Scylla and Charybdis."

Marking the 20th anniversary of the atrocities in Škabrnja on November 18, 2011, Marko Miljanić, the Croatian Army wartime commander of Škabrnja, compared the trial of the Croatian general, Ante Gotovina, to the trial of Mladić.

The Hague sentenced Gotovina in April 2011 to 24 years in prison after finding him guilty of war crimes committed during and after the military operation Oluja. "They say that General Ante Gotovina shelled Knin too much, and I tell you that every day from October 1 to November 18, 1991, when Škabrnja fell, more shells fell during one day on Škabrnja, than on Knin, Gračac, Benkovac and Obrovac throughout 'Oluja'," Miljanić asserted.

"But while General Gotovina answers in The Hague for 'Oluja', Ratko Mladić does not answer for Škabrnja. Who is to blame?" he asked. "Our judiciary and the ones who run our politics and diplomatic relations are to blame."

Miljanić voiced the belief held by many in Croatia, that all governments and parties, without exception, are to blame for the failure to punish the highest-ranking commander of JNA troops responsible for Serbian war crimes in Croatia.

Miljanić reiterated his discontent at the start of the Mladić trial in The Hague in May.

"It is unfortunate that... Croatia is not in the indictment at all. I'm not talking just about Škabrnja... where about a hundred people were killed," Miljanić told the daily newspaper *Slobodna Dalmacija* on the day the trial began.

Few in Croatia today contest Miljanić's opinion on that issue.

But, while the public feels betrayed, experts have viewed the decision to abandon plans to indict Mladić over events in Croatia in the context of the Hague court's imminent closure. The ICTY is due to close its doors on 1 July 2013, with only small "residual mechanisms" planned to finish ongoing trials.

Jadranka Sloković, a lawyer with experience of the workings of the tribunal, said the decision was "expected" as "the completion of the trial as soon as possible fits the 'exit strategy' of the Hague Tribunal."

"Since the indictment against Mladić was reduced from 16 to 11 counts, it was clear that no new events would be put in it," Sloković said.

According to her, the existing indictment is of “very questionable quality” because Mladić’s role in Croatia is mentioned only in the introduction, with a few details and a brief reminder that he had commanded the JNA 9th Corps in Knin.

### **Concentrating on Bosnia**

In response to a BIRN query lodged in September 2012 asking if Croatia’s prosecution service had ever formally requested that the ICTY expand the Mladić indictment to cover Croatia, the Prosecution Office forwarded the following written statement:

“The investigation of the crimes for which Ratko Mladić could be held responsible was directed primarily at the crimes committed in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

“This is reflected in the indictment from 1995, which was amended in 2002 and 2011.”

The statement continues: “The Office of the Prosecution, at the same time, carried out investigations of other crimes committed in Croatia, covering the other high-level offenders [and suspects] who have also been processed and tried for serious violations of international humanitarian law.”

Among others, the ICTY has indicted the following individuals for war crimes committed in Croatia: Slobodan Milošević, the former president of Serbia, Jovica Stanišić, former chief of state security, Milan Martić and Goran Hadžić, former presidents of the self-proclaimed Serbian Autonomous Region of Krajina, and Milan Babić, former prime minister of Krajina.

Martić was found guilty on June 12, 2007, and sentenced to 35 years in prison, while Babić confessed his guilt in January 2004 and was, five months later, sentenced to a 13-year jail term.

In March 2006, Babić committed suicide in his prison cell in The Hague. Slobodan Milošević died in custody on March 11, 2006, before his trial concluded, while the trials of Stanišić and Hadžić are ongoing.



## Ratko Mladić

### Ratko Mladić: Timeline of Events

**1943** Ratko Mladić was born in the village of Božinovići in Bosnia.

**1945** His father, a military leader of the Bosnian Serbs, was killed while leading a partisan attack on the home village of Croatian WWII puppet state leader Ante Pavelić.

**1961** He entered the Military Academy in Belgrade.

**1965** Upon graduation, he began his career as a second lieutenant. He went on to command a platoon, a battalion and a brigade.

**August 1989** He was promoted to head of the Education Department of the Third Military District of Skopje.

**June 1991** He became Deputy Commander of the Priština Corps in Kosovo and soon after commander of the 9th Corps of the Yugoslav People's Army, leading it against Croatian forces in the town of Knin.

**October 1991** Mladić became Major General of the Yugoslav People's Army which, under his command, fought in the Croatian war.

**August 1991** He helped Croatian Serb leader Milan Martić's paramilitary forces to besiege the village of Kijevo.

**April 1992** Mladić was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel General.

**May 2, 1992** A month after the Bosnian Republic announced its independence, Mladić and his generals blockaded the city of Sarajevo, beginning the four-year siege of the city.

**May 9, 1992** He assumed the post of Chief of Staff/Deputy Commander of the Second Military District Headquarters of the Yugoslav People's Army in Sarajevo. The following day, Mladić took command of the Second Military District Headquarters of the Yugoslav People's Army.

**May 12, 1992** In response to Bosnia's secession from Yugoslavia, the separatist Bosnian Serb parliament voted to create the Army of Republika Srpska, appointing Mladić as commander of the main staff.

**March 1994** His daughter, Ana Mladić, committed suicide in Belgrade with her father's treasured pistol.

**June 1994** Mladić was promoted to the rank of Colonel General.

**July 1995** Troops commanded by Mladić occupied the UN-protected enclaves of Srebrenica and Žepa, killing over 8,000 Bosniak men and boys and committing the ethnic cleansing of 25,000-30,000 refugees in the Srebrenica area.

**August 1995** The President of the Bosnian Serb Republic, Radovan Karadžić, demoted Mladić to the rank of adviser, accusing him of the loss of two key Serb towns in western Bosnia that had recently fallen to the Croats.

**November 1996** The President of the Bosnian Serb Republic, Biljana Plavšić, dismissed Mladić from his post although he continued receiving a pension until November 2005.

**July 1995** The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) accused Mladić of genocide, crimes against humanity and numerous war crimes.

**November 1995** The ICTY expanded the charges to include genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes for the attack on Srebrenica. He was also charged with taking UN peacekeepers hostage.

**March 2000** He was reportedly seen in a private box, surrounded by eight bodyguards, at a football match between China and Yugoslavia in Belgrade.

**March 2000** His professional army service was officially ended by a decree from the Republika Srpska President Mirko Šarović.

**January 2002** The U.S. General Secretary offered a five million dollar reward for information leading to the arrest of The Hague indictees Mladić and Karadžić.

**June 2002** The Serbian parliament passed a law mandating cooperation with the ICTY.

**December 2004** It was revealed that the Serbian Army had been harboring and protecting Mladić until 2004.

**June 2005** Human Rights Watch calls on Serbia, the EU and NATO to fulfill their legal and moral obligations and hand over Mladić and Karadžić, saying that "the victims of Srebrenica should not have to wait another decade for justice."

**December 2005** The Serbian Defense Ministry confirmed that Mladić received an army pension from Serbia-Montenegro until November 2005.

**February 2006** The Romanian government, along with various foreign and domestic media outlets, reported that Mladić was arrested in Romania, close to the Serbian border by a joint Romanian-British special operation. ICTY prosecutor Carla Del Ponte denied the rumours of Mladić's arrest, urging the Serbian government to find him without further delay.

**September 2006** Serbian authorities prosecuted people suspected of hiding Mladić. A web of his former colleagues from the Bosnian Serb Army, friends and relatives who had been helping Mladić was revealed along with the fact he had lived in a building in Jurija Gagarina Street for more than a year.

**April 2006** The Serbian and Montenegrin parliament adopted the Law on Freezing the Assets of The Hague Indictees.



**May 2006** Talks between Serbia and the EU were suspended after the Serbian government failed to meet the EU deadline to hand over Mladić.

**June 2006** There was speculation that Mladić had recently suffered a third stroke and that his chances of survival were low.

**July 2006** The Serbian government adopted an Action Plan for Future ICTY Cooperation.

**May 2007** The Serbian nationalist NGO Serbian National Movement 1389 put up fake street signs in Belgrade, renaming a boulevard after fugitive Mladić. The street was renamed the week before in tribute to late reformist Prime Minister Zoran Đinđić, who was assassinated in 2003. Several hundred Serbian Radical Party followers gathered in Belgrade to show their support for Mladić.

**October 2007** Serbia offered a reward of €1 million for information leading to the location or arrest of Mladić.

**January 2009** The Serbian National Movement 1389 put up posters naming so-called "true Serbs," among them Mladić. A poll of 1,050 people in Serbia revealed two-thirds of Serbs would not turn Mladić in.

**June 2009** Bosnian state television broadcast several video clips showing Mladić living freely in Serbia. The President of the National Council for Cooperation with The Hague tribunal Rasim Ljajić confirmed that the footage was old and was handed over to the ICTY in March 2009.

**June 16, 2010** Mladić's family filed a request to declare him dead in accordance with the law as he had been absent for seven years

**May 19, 2010** The ICTY Prosecutor said he had received Mladić's diaries from Serbia in May. The diaries are considered to be key pieces of evidence in several ongoing trials at the UN war crimes tribunal.

**October 28, 2010** The Serbian government increased by tenfold a reward for information leading to the arrest of the most wanted war crimes suspect in the Balkans.

**November 2, 2010** Serbian police searched three locations (two in Belgrade and one in Aranđelovac) where people close to Mladić are believed to be located.

**May 26, 2011** Serbian police arrest Ratko Mladić in Serbia.

**May 16, 2012** The trial against Ratko Mladić starts at The Hague tribunal.





**Ratko Mladić:  
The Force Behind the Srebrenica Killings**

The Bosnian Serb commander's role in the genocide committed in Srebrenica is in many indictments and verdicts handed down by local and international judicial institutions

## BIRN team

The name of Ratko Mladić, former commander of the Republika Srpska Army (VRS), is mentioned in many verdicts passed down by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

He is most often mentioned as "the key initiator of the killings" in Srebrenica in July 1995 and as a participant in the "preparation" for the joint criminal enterprise.

His official biography indicates that he was appointed as commander of the VRS Headquarters on May 12, 1992. As alleged in the verdict against Momčilo Krajišnik, he participated in a joint criminal enterprise with the aim of "permanently eliminating" Bosniaks and Croats from Bosnia and Herzegovina, "by using force or other means."

By a second-instance verdict the tribunal sentenced Krajišnik, a member of the mentioned joint criminal enterprise, the wartime president of the Republika Srpska Assembly, to 20 years' imprisonment for his role.

The verdict against Krajišnik noted that in June 1992 the VRS mustered 177,341 soldiers, divided into five different corps and a few units, which were not attached to those corps.

It said that all these units were under "Mladić's command" and that Mladić regularly attended the Republika Srpska Assembly sessions, at which "the strategic situation and further plans" were discussed, among other issues.

A second-instance verdict, pronounced by the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the case of Zdravko Božić, Mladen Blagojević, Željko Zarić and Zoran Živanović, former members of the Military Police Unit with the VRS Light

Infantry Brigade in Bratunac, concluded that Mladić directly participated in planning the attack on Srebrenica.

This verdict pronounced Blagojević guilty and sentenced him to seven years of imprisonment. The three other indictees were acquitted of all charges.

The verdict stated that, in March 1995 the Bosnian Serb leader, Radovan Karadžić, issued a directive to the VRS, urging it to complete the physical separation of Srebrenica from the enclave of Žepa, making life more difficult for the besieged residents of Srebrenica.

Karadžić, the first president of Republika Srpska and supreme commander of its armed forces, is on trial at The Hague, where he is charged with genocide, crimes against humanity and violation of the laws and practices of warfare. He was arrested in Belgrade in July 2008.

In the course of the same month, March 1995, the VRS Headquarters issued another directive, signed by Mladić, ordering the Drina Corps to undertake "active military operations ... around the [Bosniak] enclaves."

A second-instance verdict, pronounced by the State Court against seven former members of the Second Special Police Squad from Šekovići and VRS, sentencing them to a total of 181 years of imprisonment, describes further preparations for the attack on Srebrenica.

It alleged that on July 2, 1995, Milenko Živanović, then commander of the Drina Corps, ordered an attack on Srebrenica, which had been already designated a UN protected zone. The military operation was named "Krivaja 95."

The UN Security Council adopted Resolution 819, declaring Srebrenica, Goražde and Žepa protected zones on April 16, 1993. As a result, they were not to be exposed to any military operations.

The military operations against Srebrenica began on July 6, 1995, and began with the shelling of the town.

On July 9, 1995, the Drina Corps received a new order from Karadžić, giving "a green light for the occupation of Srebrenica town." The order was executed on July 11.

Accompanied by Živanović, Radislav Krstić, former chief of headquarters of the Drina Corps, who was sentenced to 35 years of imprisonment for crimes committed in Srebrenica, and other VRS officers, Mladić "took a triumphal walk along the empty Srebrenica streets" on July 11, 1995.

The verdict against Krstić described Mladić as "a powerful figure" and as a "key initiator of the killing" committed in Srebrenica in July 1995.

Dražen Erdemović, a former member of the Tenth VRS Reconnaissance Squad, who was sentenced by the ICTY to five years of imprisonment after he admitted taking part in the shooting of Srebrenica residents at Pilica agricultural farm, near Zvornik on July 16, 1995, claimed he saw Mladić in Srebrenica.

A few indictments and verdicts pertaining to the genocide in Srebrenica note that after the seizure of Srebrenica, the VRS and Republika Srpska Ministry of Interior designed and implemented a plan to execute several thousand

males, men and boys, killed “deliberately and methodically”, solely on the basis of their ethnicity.

In response to the Bosnian Serb shelling, about 25,000 women, children and elderly people at first sought shelter in the UN Dutch Battalion base, in Potočari.

According to the second-instance verdict against the seven people sentenced for genocide, about 15,000 other Bosniaks, soldiers and civilians, headed towards Tuzla through the woods, seeking to escape.

The verdict further stated that Mladić, Krstić and other representatives of the Serbian military and civil authorities met the UN forces in Bosnia, UNPROFOR and representatives of the Bosniaks sheltering in Potočari on July 11 and 12, 1995.

On that occasion, Mladić told them that he would oversee the evacuation of the refugees from Potočari, while adding that all men, aged between 16 and 60, would be checked in order to determine whether there were any “war criminals” among them.

As mentioned in the verdict against Krstić, at this meeting Mladić insisted the Bosnian Serb actions were not targeted against civilians, calling on UNPROFOR to provide buses for their transportation.

Mladić, Krstić and other officers were present in front of the UN Military Base in Potočari on July 12, 1995, when between 50 and 60 buses and trucks arrived. Those buses and trucks were used to transport women, children and the elderly.

The ICTY verdict against Vidoje Blagojević, commander of the VRS Bratunac Brigade, and Dragan Jokić, chief of the Engineering Unit with the VRS Zvornik Brigade VRS, mentions that, on Mladić’s orders, the Republika Srpska Ministry of Interior (MUP), “played the leading role in transporting refugees from Potočari”.

It further alleges that Mladić was present at that location, alongside other high-ranking officers.

The ICTY sentenced Blagojević and Jokić to 15 and nine years of imprisonment respectively for crimes committed in the Srebrenica area during July 1995.

Members of the VRS and MUP then separated men, women and children in Potočari, near the UN Base, on July 12 and 13.

At a meeting held in Bratunac, Mladić tried to reach an agreement concerning the surrender of members of the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina from Srebrenica. As the agreement was not reached, VRS and MUP forces were ordered to block the departing convoy of refugees from Potočari.

Between 5,000 and 6,000 Bosniaks, mostly men, were meanwhile either captured by, or surrendered to, VRS and MUP forces in the area of Kravica, Sandići, Konjević polje and Milići on July 13, 1995. Some of these were taken to Kravica Agricultural Cooperative and shot on July 13.

The first genocide verdict, pronounced in Sarajevo in the summer 2008, says Mladić came to the meadow in Sandići and the Agricultural Cooperative, and addressed the prisoners.

As stated in the verdict against Dragan Obrenović, former chief of headquarters and deputy commander of the First Zvornik Infantry Brigade with the Drina Corps, Mladić gave an order for some of the men captured fleeing from Srebrenica to be taken to Zvornik and shot. The order was executed on July 13, 1995.

After he admitted taking part in the crime committed in Srebrenica, the ICTY sentenced Obrenović to 17 years of imprisonment.

The men who had been separated from the rest of the convoy in Potočari, and others, who had been captured at other locations, were held in detention for some time prior to being executed.

Following the execution of the men at various locations and their immediate burial in mass graves, their bodies were exhumed and reburied at other locations as per Mladić's orders.

As per its previous practice, the Prosecution might propose acceptance of these previously determined facts.



### **Ratko Mladić: From Promising Officer to Bloodstained Warlord**

When Mladić ordered his army to bomb the people of Sarajevo until they 'go insane', he revealed the murderous intentions that would culminate in the Srebrenica massacre

#### **BIRN team**

Ratko Mladić was born in the village of Božinovići, near Kalinovik, on May 12, 1943, in the middle of the Second World War.

At 15, he "started his military career" by entering the Military and Industrial School in Zemun, near Belgrade, graduating from the Military Academy.

At just 22 years of age he became an officer in Skopje, Macedonia. He was the youngest member and commander of an automatic engineering unit in the Yugoslav National Army, JNA.

In the spring of 1991, when the armed conflict started in Croatia, Mladić went to Knin, in northern Dalmatia, then the epicentre of the Serbian revolt against Croatian independence.

At first Commander of the Ninth Corps of the JNA, he soon received the rank of major general.

Under Mladić's command, JNA forces engaged in the war in Croatia on the side of the rebel Serbs from the beginning, trying out and testing the forced movements of civilian populations that would later become known as "ethnic cleansing."

During a raid in Serbia, the police found Mladić's personal war diaries, which contained important insights into his strategy.

In them, he referred to "moving populations," as well as to plans to sacrifice the Croatian Serb statelet, the so-called Republika Srpska Krajina, for parts of Bosnia.

"I told them to draw the lines of the [future] borders and to move the population..." Mladić wrote in his diary.

After the war in Croatia wound down at the end of 1991, Mladić was moved elsewhere.

On May 9, 1992, he was appointed commander of the Second Military District of the JNA, covering much of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Three days later, the parliament of the self-proclaimed Serbian Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina appointed Mladić as commander of the Republika Srpska Army (VRS).

In an interview with the Belgrade-based magazine NIN in February 1994, Mladić said he became a general "in troubled times of war".

"When I took over my position in the Second Military Region, I tasked myself with gathering people and forming the command and headquarters... I knew immediately that a big historic event was going to happen there," Mladić said in the interview.

In April 1992, Sarajevo was attacked and placed under siege, which turned out to last for 1,425 days. Systematic shelling and sniper targeting of civilians started, accompanied by shortages of food, water and electricity.

"Shell Velušići and Pofalići because there are not many Serbs in those settlements," Mladić ordered on May 28, 1992, incidentally mispronouncing the Sarajevo settlement of Velešići.

"And shell the part near Dobrovoljačka street, and up there around Humska street and up Đure Đakovića street," he continued.

"Don't let them sleep at all. Make them go insane," he continued.

"Can you shell Baščaršija? Fire a salvo at Baščaršija. Keep the Presidency and Parliament buildings under direct fire. Shoot slowly, in intervals, until I order you to stop," Mladić ordered on the same occasion.

That night, many buildings in central Sarajevo were set ablaze. More than a hundred wounded people were brought to the hospitals within hours.

Those who stayed in the besieged city remember months spent living in fear, as people were killed queuing for water and bread, or running across bridges under sniper fire. Hospitals were shelled, along with museums and libraries.

Available data suggest that more than 13,000 Sarajevo residents died as a result of these activities, which lasted until the siege was finally broken in 1995.

More than half of this number died in 1992 alone. The number of indirect victims of the siege, who died of hunger or disease or who committed suicide out of desperation, has not been possible to establish.

Mladić was unrepentant. "I am just defending my people," he said on many occasions during the war.

The military forces commanded by Mladić were under the supreme command of Radovan Karadžić, the then president of Republika Srpska, who "had the power to appoint, promote and dismiss military officers," according to The Hague tribunal Prosecution Office, which has charged him with genocide and numerous other crimes.



Addressing Karadžić, the only person to whom he was subordinate, Mladić said that he wants "our country, Republika Srpska, and the Serbian people to prosper."

"I want your words, uttered at the last Assembly session, to be embedded and conveyed by these media to each and every man in our country."

"I want us to stand by each other and overcome these evil times, go through the storm and make our dream of all Serbs living in one country come true," Mladić said during the war.

Although he said he was "defending his people," Mladić freely admitted that offensives were "the main method of his warfare style."

"Attacking is my nature. This is acceptable to the Main Headquarters of Republika Srpska. My goal is simple – protection of the Serb territory and the people who have lived there for ages," he said, shortly after he became commander of the Main Headquarters.

In July 1995, just a few months before the war ended in Bosnia, Mladić's forces captured the eastern Bosnian town of Srebrenica, which the United Nations had declared a UN "protected zone" two years earlier.

Mladić arrived in Srebrenica with a smile on his face, congratulating the soldiers who met him in the streets of the deserted town.

Cameras recorded the general's movements. Republika Srpska Television and the Serbian Television, the only TV stations present, reported on the "liberation" of the town, from which tens of thousands of people were then fleeing.

"Here, we are in Serbian Srebrenica on July 11, 1995," Mladić said. "On the eve of yet another big Serbian holy day, we are presenting this town to the Serbian people. Finally, the time has come to get even with the Turks for the first time since the uprising against Ottoman rule."

He then ordered his soldiers: "Go ahead towards Potočari, Bratunac... don't stop."

What followed was the mass murder of several thousand men and boys, which subsequent indictments and verdicts passed down by international and local courts have classified as genocide.

Several thousand women and their children fled the town for the UN Base in Potočari. At the same time, thousands of men tried to head for Tuzla through the woods.

During the night of July 11, 1995, Mladić held three meetings in the Fontana hotel in Bratunac. The fate of the wretched people of Srebrenica was the subject of those meetings.

"You can either survive or disappear. In order for you to survive, I am asking all your men, who are armed, even if they committed crimes, and committed crimes against my people, to hand in their weapons to the VRS," Mladić told representatives of Srebrenica, who attended one meeting with members of the Dutch UN Battalion.

On July 12, Mladić arrived in Potočari, accompanied by a TV crew. The cameras filmed him distributing Toblerone chocolate bars to children who had

not seen such luxuries for years, telling their parents not to be afraid because "nobody will do them any harm."

"All of you who want to stay can do so. All those who want to leave this territory are free to do so. We have secured sufficient number of buses and trucks for you," he said.

Mladić repeated the same message at a meadow in Sandići, in a hangar in Bratunac and at a stadium in Nova Kasaba, addressing captured men and boys who were surrounded by armed Serbian soldiers.

Instead, those who were captured or who surrendered were shot dead. According to The Hague prosecution indictment of 2002, "more than 7,000 prisoners captured in the area around Srebrenica were summarily executed from 13 July 19 July, 1995. The killings continued thereafter."

In late August 1995, the international community finally intervened militarily to end the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

NATO bombed Serbian positions near Sarajevo and throughout Bosnia in order to force the Bosnian Serbs to the peace table. Operations lasted for more than 10 days.

"The bombs, which have fallen on our kids, have revealed the truth about the West and made the Serbs, who have not done so to date, start using their heads," Mladić said. "This war will last until their [Western] kids come home in coffins."

The war ended with the signing of the Dayton Peace Accord on December 14, 1995, in Ohio, U.S. A short time later the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, ICTY, issued a warrant against Mladić on the basis of two indictments filed in mid-1995.

"They would like to handcuff our generals and take them to The Hague, while their officers walk freely here and distribute posters and media material to children," Mladić retorted. "I can only be tried by my people."

Mladić's trial for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide is opened before the ICTY on May 16, 2012.

In July 1996, an international warrant against Mladić was issued. After several years on the run, Mladić was arrested in Serbia on May 26, 2011, and extradited to The Hague five days later.



HE WAS THE LEADER OF THE BOSNIAN SERBS DURING THE BOSNIAN WARS OF THE 1990S. HE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MASSACRE OF SOME 8,000 MUSLIM MEN AND BOYS AT SREBENICA IN 1995. SINCE WORLD WAR II, THE FORMER GENERAL BECAME ONE OF THE MOST FEARED MEN IN HIS WORLD. ON MAY 26, 2011, HE WAS CAPTURED IN SERBIA AFTER HAVING HIDDEN IN A FOREST FOR OVER TWO YEARS.

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THE WEEK AFTER HIS CAPTURE, HE WAS BROUGHT TO THE HEAVENLY COURT BY BELGRADE, SERBIA, WHICH WANTED HIM TO BE EXTRADITED. A DAY EARLIER, HIS LAWYER HAD ARGUED THAT THE CHARGES AGAINST HIM WERE PROBABLY NOT SUFFICIENT FOR TRIAL.

IN HIS FIRST COURT APPEARANCE, HE DENIED THE CHARGES READ OUT TO HIM AS "OBSCENE" AND "MONSTRIC". HE REFUSED TO ENTER A FORMAL PLEA BUT HAS SAID THAT HE IS NOT GUILTY OF MURDER. THE PROSECUTION HAS SAID HE IS GUILTY.

### TRIAL BEGINS, THEN IS SUSPENDED

THE TRIAL OF MR. MLADIC, TO OPEN IN THE FALL OF 2012, WILL BE THE FIRST RECREATION OF A PROCEEDING SAID TO HAVE BEEN HAMPERED BY MILITARY OFFICIALS UNDER HIS COMMAND AS BOSNIAN SERB FORCES CARRIED OUT A CAMPAIGN OF "ETHNIC CLEANSING". IN 1995, HE DIRECTED A "SCHOOL OF TERROR" THAT COULD BE TRAINED OR GROOMED AT A QUARTER AGAINST CIVIL LIFE.

THE INDICTMENT SAID MR. MLADIC WILLINGLY JOINED SERBIAN POLITICIANS IN DEVISING THE BROAD POLICY KNOWN AS "ETHNIC CLEANSING," WHEN SOLDIERS AND MILITIAS SWEEP THROUGH TOWNS AND VILLAGES IN BOSNIA, DRIVING OUT TENS OF THOUSANDS OF MUSLIM AND CROAT FAMILIES TO CREATE LANDS FOR SERBS. AT THE HEIGHT OF THE BOSNIAN CAMPAIGN, FORCES UNDER MR. MLADIC'S COMMAND CONTROLLED NEARLY THREE-QUARTERS OF BOSNIA.

MR. MLADIC LISTENED IMPASSIVELY TO THE RECOUNTING OF EVENTS THAT LIE AT THE HEART OF HIS 11-COUNT INDICTMENT ON CHARGES OF GENOCIDE AND CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY. HE HAS REFUSED TO ENTER A FORMAL PLEA ON HIS BEHALF.



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