

Ratko Mladic arrested

The army commander behind the Bosnia massacre held in Serbia



BBC ONLINE

Ratko Mladic, wanted by UN prosecutors for war crimes during the Bosnian civil war, has been arrested in Serbia yesterday after a decade in hiding.

Serbian President Boris Tadic confirmed the arrest of the former Bosnian Serb army chief at a news conference.

Gen Mladic is accused of a key role in the massacre of at least 7,500 men and boys at Srebrenica in 1995.

He was the most prominent Bosnian war crimes suspect at large since the arrest of Radovan Karadzic in 2008.

President Tadic said work was under way to extradite Gen Mladic to the international war crimes tribunal in The Hague.

The detention, he said, had closed one chapter in Serbian history, bringing the country and the region closer to reconciliation.

It had also opened the doors to membership of the European Union, he added.

Gen Mladic was said by Serbian media to have been arrested in Vojvodina, a northern province of Serbia, in the early hours of yesterday morning. President Tadic would only confirm he had been arrested "on Serbian soil".

Gen Mladic was indicted by the UN war crimes tribunal in The Hague in 1995 for genocide over the killings that July at Srebrenica - the worst single atrocity in Europe since World War II - and other crimes.

Having lived freely in the Serbian capital, Belgrade, he disappeared after the arrest of former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic in 2001.

Speculation mounted that Gen Mladic would soon be arrested when Karadzic was captured in Belgrade in July 2008.

Just before news of yesterday's arrest, UN war crimes chief prosecutor Serge Brammertz accused Serbia of failing to do enough to find Gen Mladic.

"The capture is the biggest obligation of Serbia," he said in a report sent to the UN Security Council.



PHOTO: AFP

A picture taken on December 24, 1995 shows a Bosnian Serb woman mourning in Sarajevo while visiting the grave of her son who was killed in October 1995 at the nearby front line in Sarajevo's Serb-held suburbs.

Ratko Mladic



Wanted for genocide, war crimes
68 years old

March 12, 1943	
Born in Bosnia	
1991	Organised separatist Serb militias in Croatia
1992	Made commander of Bosnian-Serb forces
1995	His troops overran UN-guarded safe area of Srebrenica and killed more than 8,000 Muslim men and boys
1996	International Criminal court issues arrest warrant for crimes against humanity, war crimes and complicity in genocide
June 26, 2011	Arrested in Serbia

AFP

Relief, delight after arrest

AFP, Paris

World leaders called for Ratko Mladic to be swiftly sent for trial yesterday after the arrest of the long-wanted Bosnian Serb warcrimes suspect as survivors expressed their relief at his capture.

US president Barak Obama in his reaction said the arrest of the most wanted remaining Bosnian war crimes suspect was an "important day for the families of Mladic's many victims, for Serbia, for Bosnia, for the United States, and for international justice."

European Union heads said it eased the way for Serbia to join the bloc in the medium-term.

The survivors of the 1995 Srebrenica massacre expressed satisfaction at his arrest.

"After 16 years of waiting, for us, the victims' families, this is a relief," Hajra Catic, head of the Srebrenica Women association,

told AFP.

"For us, this is really very important," added Catic, whose son and husband were killed in the massacre.

United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon called it "an historic day" for international justice.

The cross-border police agency Interpol struck a similar note, with its head Ronald Noble hailing "a triumph for international justice."

Paddy Ashdown, the international community's high representative to Bosnia from 2002 to 2007, called the arrest a "great moment for the Balkans and for international justice".

"Mladic was one of the two primary architects of the Balkan horrors, including the worst acts of genocide on the European mainland for the last 50 years," he said.

The charges

AFP, The Hague

- Two counts of genocide of Bosnian Muslims.
 - Establishment of camps and detention centres
 - Killing of 8,000 men and boys, popularly known as Srebrenica massacre.

Thousands of people were held in horrific living conditions in the camps run by Bosnian Serbs at the start of the war. In the Prijedor area alone more than 1,500 people died in the camps of Omarska, Trnopolje and Keraterm.

- Six counts of war crimes, which included details of his role in a "protracted military campaign" in which Bosnian Serb forces under his control used artillery and mortars as well as snipers on civilians in Sarajevo.
- Seven counts of crimes against humanity committed in various municipalities around Bosnia and related to persecution of Bosnian Muslims based on political, racial and religious grounds.

Mladic is not only charged with having personally "planned, instigated, ordered or otherwise aided and abetted in the planning, preparation or execution of these crimes" but also for being responsible for the atrocities committed by Bosnian Serb troops subordinate to him which he failed to prevent or punish.

Ratko Mladic

Bosnian-Serb military chief, held responsible for Srebrenica massacre and Sarajevo siege to face International Criminal Tribunal after 16 years on the run



Civil war looms as dozens killed in Yemen capital

US orders embassy staff to leave

REUTERS, Sanaa

Dozens of Yemenis were killed in overnight gun battles in the capital, government officials said yesterday, as fighting aimed at ending President Ali Abdullah Saleh's three-decade-long rule threatened to ignite civil war.

Residents were fleeing Sanaa by the hundreds, hurriedly fastening possessions to the roofs of cars, hoping to escape the violence that has killed more than 40 people since Monday and threatened to spread into other parts of the capital Sanaa.

The defence ministry said in an Internet posting that at least 28 people were killed in an explosion in an arms storage area of Sanaa in yesterday's early hours.

Yemen's state prosecutor ordered the arrest of "rebellious" leaders of the tribal group led by the al-Ahmar family and a government official said the headquarters of an opposition television station had been "destroyed," without giving details.

The United States ordered all non-essential diplomats and embassy family members to leave the country. "The security threat level in Yemen is extremely high due to terrorist activities and civil unrest," the State Department said.

US President Barack Obama has called for Saleh to sign the deal but analysts said

Washington has little leverage in Yemen even though it has sent about \$300 million in aid to help prop up Saleh's government.

Tribal leader Sadiq al-Ahmar told Reuters there was no chance for mediation with Saleh and called on regional and global powers to force him out before the Arabian Peninsula country plunges into civil war.

"Ali Abdullah Saleh is a liar, liar, liar," said Ahmar, leader of the Hashed tribal federation. "We are firm. He will leave this country barefoot."

The most recent clashes have been concentrated in a part of northern Sanaa where fighters loyal to Ahmar have been trying to take over government buildings.

Saleh said on Wednesday he would make no more concessions to those seeking his departure. But the capital of the country of 23 million has begun to feel like a city at war.

In Sanaa, there were long queues at bakeries, banks and petrol stations as residents tried to stock up on cash and food before fleeing to safer areas in the impoverished state.

Long lines of cars snaked out of the city, bags piled high on their roofs, even as gunmen blocked entrances to prevent tribesmen from bringing in reinforcements, witnesses said.

A government official had said the airport was briefly closed due to the fighting but had reopened.

Egypt to lift restrictions on Gaza border

AFP, Cairo

Egypt will open the Rafah border crossing on a daily basis starting this weekend in a bid to ease the blockade on the Gaza Strip, the official M E N A news agency reported on Wednesday.

Palestinians will now be able to travel through Rafah - Gaza's only crossing that bypasses Israel - under entry rules in place before the blockade was tightened in 2007.

Egyptian authorities will now open the border from "9:00 am to 5:00 pm on a daily basis, except for Fridays and public holidays" starting on Saturday, MENA said.

"Palestinian women of all ages will be exempted from visas as will men under 18 or over 40," it said.

The exemption also applies to Palestinians entering Egypt for study as long as they have proof of affiliation to an Egyptian university.

Suicide attack at Pakistan police station kills 32

AFP, Peshawar

A Taliban suicide car bomb struck Pakistani police yesterday for a second day, killing 32 people as the militia vowed no reprieve in their quest to avenge the US killing of Osama bin Laden.

The attack defied the government's authorisation of "all means" to wipe out militants, which nonetheless stopped short of unveiling specific new measures despite a string of humiliating Taliban attacks on security forces.

Police deputy inspector general Masood Khan Afridi said, "The bomber blew up the car at a checkpoint close to the police station."

A pick-up vehicle crossed the district police office in the town of Hangu, police official Latif Khan said, before exploding at a barrier outside the city police station, creating a 10-foot long and foot-deep crater.

Sahibzada Mohammad Anis, the top administrative official for Hangu, said that 32 people had died and 56 others were wounded.

Regional police spokesman Fazal Naeem said most of those killed were policemen and predicted that the toll would rise.

"We accept responsibility for this attack. This was a small attack to avenge Osama's martyrdom," a spokesman for Pakistan's main Taliban faction,

Ehsanullah Ehsan, told AFP by telephone from an undisclosed location.

"Soon you will see bigger attacks. Revenge for Osama can't be satisfied just with small attacks," he said.

The umbrella group have claimed a string of attacks on the security forces to avenge the al-Qaeda chief's killing on May 2 in an American special forces raid that apparently unfolded without the military realising.

Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani convened a meeting of the defence committee of the cabinet on Wednesday to review security measures, which was attended by cabinet ministers, army, navy, air and intelligence chiefs.

It's time for US and West to lead

Says president Obama

BBC ONLINE

President Obama has told British politicians on Wednesday that, despite the rise of new global powers, the time for US and European leadership "is now".

He said the influence of the US, UK and allies would remain "indispensable," in a speech in Parliament on the second day of his UK state visit.

But he said that leadership would need to "change with the times" to reflect economic and security challenges.

He is the first US president to address MPs and peers in Westminster Hall.

As he began, Obama joked that with an "especially active press corps", the relationship between the UK and US

IN HIS SPEECH, OBAMA ALSO

- Acknowledged differences in the US and UK approach to deficit reduction
- Insisted the allies' conviction to stop Afghanistan from becoming a haven for terrorists
- Warned North Korea and Iran on nuclear weapons
- Supported "a secure Israel and a sovereign Palestine"
- Defended action in Libya

was forever being "over analysed".

But he added: "There are few nations that stand firmer, speak louder and fight harder to defend democratic values around the world than the United States and the United Kingdom."

He said the two countries had "arrived at a pivotal moment once more" following global recession and years of conflict.

With the winding down of operations in Iraq, progress in Afghanistan



and having dealt "al-Qaeda a huge blow by killing its leader Osama Bin Laden", President Obama said it was time to enter a "new chapter in our shared history" with new challenges.

But he rejected arguments that the rise of superpowers like China and India meant the end for American and European influence in the world.

"Perhaps, the argument goes, these nations represent the future, and the time for our leadership has passed. That argument is wrong. The time for our leadership is now," he said.

"It was the United States, the United Kingdom, and our democratic allies that shaped a world in which new nations could emerge and individuals could thrive.

"And even as more nations take on the responsibilities of global leadership, our alliance will remain indispensable to the goal of a century that is more peaceful, more prosperous and more just."

But he added that leadership had to "change with the times" and the days were gone when an American president and UK prime minister could "sit in a room and solve the world's problems over a glass of brandy".

President Obama said the US and UK must invest in nations like Tunisia and Egypt which were making a transition to democracy, through trade and

commerce, while "sanctioning those who pursue repression".

"We do this knowing that the West must overcome suspicion and mistrust among many in the Middle East and North Africa - a mistrust that is rooted in a difficult past," he said.

He acknowledged that the West had been accused of hypocrisy in its dealings with the region but said the West must acknowledge its interests while insisting it rejected "as false the choice between our interests and our ideals, between stability and democracy".

He stressed the shared values of the US and UK - about the rights of the individual, regardless of race, and the rule of law.

The speech was largely heard in silence, but there was some laughter at Obama's jokes.

And he got a round of applause as he struck a more personal note, saying that the example of the US and UK had shown "that it's possible for the sons

"That it's possible for the sons and daughters of former colonies to sit here as members of this great Parliament, and for the grandson of a Kenyan who served as a cook in the British Army to stand before you as president of the United States!"

and daughters of former colonies to sit here as members of this great Parliament, and for the grandson of a Kenyan who served as a cook in the British Army to stand before you as president of the United States".

It took him more than 10 minutes to leave Westminster Hall as he stopped to shake hands with the ranks of politicians and other prominent figures who had lined the building to hear his speech.

NEWS IN brief

Series of blasts kill 3 in China

AFP, Beijing

A jobless 52-year-old man allegedly triggered a series of explosions at government buildings in eastern China yesterday, killing himself and at least one other, state media said.

The unusually brazen and premeditated incident is likely to add to official fears over possible public unrest stemming from a range of social grievances, with soaring inflation topping the list.

Egypt ex-minister gets 5 years for fraud

AFP, Cairo

A Cairo criminal court yesterday sentenced Egypt's former housing minister Ahmed al-Maghrabi to five years in prison on corruption charges, a judicial source told AFP.

Judge Assem Abdul Hamid Nasr found Maghrabi guilty of the illegal acquisition of public property and wasting public funds worth around \$12 million, the source said.

Gang battle in Mexico kills 28

AFP, Mexico City

At least 28 people have been killed in a vicious shoot-out between rival Mexican gangs in one of the deadliest single events in four years of spiralling drug violence across the country.

Local media quoted witnesses as saying the rival gangs had exchanged hails of gunfire and hurled grenades at each other for around an hour.