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Overseer Fires 3 Bosnian Serb Police Officers

By REUTERS

SARAJEVO, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Feb. 9 — The international overseer for Bosnia fired three Bosnian Serb police officers on Monday, accusing them of helping Radovan Karadzic, the former Bosnian Serb leader being sought for war crimes.

In Washington, the Treasury Department froze the assets of 13 people suspected of obstructing the Balkan peace effort.

The new move in a yearlong campaign against people suspected of helping Dr. Karadzic evade the international authorities came a month after NATO troops were reported to be close to catching him in Pale.

The international overseer, Lord Ashdown, and the American ambassador to Bosnia, Clifford Bond, said Monday that the three police officers and seven other people would be added to blacklists of those seen as obstacles to peace in the region.

Dr. Karadzic is considered one of the people most responsible for Bosnia's conflict from 1992 to 1995, in which 200,000 people, mainly Muslims, were killed. He is wanted on charges of genocide by the United Nations war crimes tribunal in The Hague.

"Mr. Karadzic heads a crime gang, and we are responding accordingly," said Lord Ashdown, a Briton who has power to fire and appoint officials and impose laws in Bosnia.

There are already more than 160 people on a Balkan-wide United States blacklist, and Lord Ashdown has a separate list of 16 people whose Bosnian assets have been frozen.

Lord Ashdown removed Veljko Borovcanin, chief of police for the Serb-controlled area of Sarajevo, which includes Pale; Ivan Sarac, the Pale police chief; and Dragan Basevic, a police officer.

He also dismissed Mirko Sarovic — who resigned almost a year ago from the state presidency over an illegal export of arms to Iraq — from the position of a deputy president of the hard-line Serb Democratic Party that Dr. Karadzic founded in 1990.

In Washington, the United States said Monday that it would block the American assets of Mr. Sarovic, the three police officials and nine other people it said were impeding peace in the Balkans. The Treasury Department prohibited American citizens from engaging in financial transactions with them.

Among those that Lord Ashdown blacklisted were a judge, two former senior police and intelligence officers and several businessmen.

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