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Wife of Fugitive Bosnian Serb Leader Urges Him to Surrender

By [NICHOLAS WOOD](#)

LJUBLJANA, Slovenia, July 28 - The wife of Radovan Karadzic, one of Bosnia's most-wanted war crimes suspects, made a surprise and impassioned plea on Thursday for him to turn himself in to the United Nations war crimes tribunal in The Hague after nearly 10 years on the run.

In an interview broadcast on television stations across the region, Ljiljana Karadzic said her family could no longer live with the constant pressure from international and local security forces seeking her husband's arrest.

Mr. Karadzic, the wartime leader of the Bosnian Serbs, is the leading war crimes suspect in the Balkans alongside the former commander of the Bosnian Serb Army, Gen. Ratko Mladic. Both men are wanted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and are charged with planning the killings of over 7,000 Muslim men and boys in Srebrenica in July 1995.

Visibly shaken and close to tears, Mrs. Karadzic made her statement in what appeared to be a television studio. She explained she had decided her family's welfare had to take priority over her husband's.

"Our family is under constant pressures from all sides," she said. "Our lives and existence are threatened. That is why I have to make a choice between my loyalty to you and toward my children and grandchildren. And I have made it."

"It is painful and difficult for me to plead with you - however, I am pleading with you with all my heart and soul to surrender," she said.

Earlier this month, Mr. Karadzic's son Aleksander, was detained for a week by NATO-led peacekeeping troops. NATO officials said he was implicated in the network that has helped his father evade arrest.

While Mr. Karadzic's family has been under increasing pressure - NATO has stepped up its surveillance and search operations around the family's hometown, Pale, in the last year and half - Mrs. Karadzic has, until now, been a staunch supporter of her husband and has maintained his innocence.

Her statement took both international civilian and military officials in Sarajevo by surprise. As the 10th anniversary of the war's end approaches, pressure to arrest Mr. Karadzic and General Mladic is growing. Their capture is seen as essential to development in the region; neither Bosnia nor Serbia and Montenegro can start talks on membership in the European Union or join NATO until they are arrested.

Relatives of other war crime suspects have been offered financial incentives by Serbian and Bosnian Serb government officials in order to encourage their surrender, and one political commentator speculated that the family was seeking to gain financially, if and when Mr. Karadzic surrendered to the tribunal.

"I think it's all about benefits for the family," said Miodrag Zivanovic, a philosophy professor at Banja Luka University in Bosnia. "I don't believe she was sincere; it's all about the profit," he said.

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