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Nazi hunters receive names of 184 suspected Lithuanian war criminals

AFP

VILNIUS, July 21 (AFP) - The Nazi-hunting Simon Wiesenthal Center said on Monday it has received the names of 184 Lithuanians suspected of Holocaust-related crimes since it offered a reward for information a year ago.

"The results achieved during the first year of the operation 'Last Chance in Lithuania' are the best proof of the significance of this project," Efraim Zuroff, the project coordinator said in a statement.

"Most of the names submitted to us were unknown and they constitute an important addition to our knowledge of the identity of the perpetrators of the Holocaust," he added.

He said 32 names of suspects had been submitted for formal investigation to the Baltic state's public prosecutor and two official murder investigations had already been opened by the Lithuanian authorities.

Under its Last Chance project launched a year ago the organisation offered a 10,000 dollar reward for information which could lead to the conviction and punishment of Holocaust criminals in the three Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

To date the Center has not given a financial reward to informants in Lithuania but said it promises to do so "as soon as there is an official murder investigation against any suspect healthy enough to stand trial".

About 90 percent of Lithuania's pre-war 220,000-strong Jewish community perished during the Holocaust.