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## Reward program for Nazis yields leads in Lithuania

BY ADAM ELLICK

NEW YORK -- A reward for information on Nazi war criminals has led the Lithuanian government to investigate possible war crimes in two of the country's villages.

In July, the Simon Wiesenthal Center and the Miami-based Targun Shlishi Foundation launched Operation Last Chance, offering a \$10,000 reward for information that leads to the conviction and punishment of Nazi war criminals.

Ludvikas Sabutis, deputy to the senior prosecutor of Lithuania's Special Investigations Service, received a phone call last month from an unnamed Lithuanian who provided the names of those suspected of involvement in the 1942 killings of at least 20 Jews in the southern village of Seirijai.

Preliminary information suggests German soldiers killed Jews with assistance from local Lithuanian residents.

Lithuanian prosecutors said one of the suspects was charged with war crimes during the Soviet era and later died in Siberia, while a second immigrated to the United States, where he possibly died.

The prosecutor also said an investigation into the massacre of Jews in Gruzdiai, in northern Lithuania, has been reopened.

Nazi-hunter Efram Zuroff, director of the Simon Wiesenthal Center's Israeli office, says the program has turned up the names of 47 war crimes suspects in Lithuania, three Estonians and one Latvian.

Ninety-four percent of Jews in Lithuania and Latvia died during World War II.

Historians say the number of Jewish deaths would have been far lower had ordinary citizens not participated in the killings.

None of the people who provided leads have asked for a reward, said Simonas Alperavicius, the head of the Lithuanian Jewish community, who has fielded the phone calls from informants.

Zuroff expects the flow of leads to continue. Last week he ran ads in Lithuania's largest dailies.

