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# Australia urged to extradite suspected war criminal

By SAM SER



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The Simon Wiesenthal Center on Wednesday urged Australia to extradite suspected war criminal Karoly (Charles) Zentai to Hungary, expressing "deep satisfaction" that Hungary had acted on the center's information in the case but calling upon the Australian authorities to respond quickly.

Hungary submitted a formal extradition request for Zentai last month, but started investigating him - and working with Australian authorities - in December. Zentai is suspected of participating, with two other Hungarian Army soldiers, in the fatal torture and beating of 18vear-old Peter Balazs at a Budapest army barracks in 1944 for the Jewish teen's failure to wear a yellow Star of David. The two other soldiers were convicted and sentenced for their part in the murder.

As part of "Operation Last Chance," the Simon Wiesenthal Center and the Targum Shlishi organization traced Zentai to the suburbs of Perth in Western Australia, his home for some 40 years. The octogenarian former

mental health nurse has denied the allegations and taken comfort in the support of his local Catholic church, according to Australian media.

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Master's Degrees Australia's Justice Ministry is still reviewing the extradition request.

Australia's obligation to do its share to help complete the process."

"We have had an official request from the Hungarian government for the extradition of Mr. Charles Zentai on suspected war crimes," Justice Minister Chris Ellison told reporters. "That will be processed in accordance with our extradition laws. Of course Mr. Zentai, like any person in Australia, has a presumption of innocence until proven guilty."

In a joint statement on Wednesday, Efraim Zuroff of the Simon Wiesenthal Center and Targum Shlishi founder Aryeh Rubin said that the extradition request submitted by

Hungary "creates an excellent opportunity for Australia to take successful legal action for

Hungary has taken all the necessary steps to achieve justice in this case, and now it is

the first time against a Nazi war criminal who... was able to illegally gain entry to Australia.

Meanwhile, Hungarian Ambassador to Australia Lajos Fodor told the Australian Associated Press, "The Hungarian side is waiting for an answer from the Australian government."



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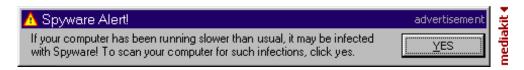
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