

## A Final Push to Nab Nazi War Criminals Hidden in Brazil and South America

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The Simon Wiesenthal Center, a prominent Jewish rights group, has launched Operation Last Chance to search for clues leading to 150 to 300 suspected war criminals which are believed to have taken refuge in Brazil, Argentina, Chile and Uruguay, following Nazi Germany's defeat in 1945.

The project, which offers financial rewards for information facilitating the prosecution and punishment of Holocaust perpetrators, began in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia in 2002.

"The project ... has revealed the names of 480 suspects in 20 countries. Ninety-nine of those cases have been referred to state prosecutors," the Buenos Aires office of the Simon Wiesenthal Center said in a statement, referring to worldwide figures for the program.

The project also led to three arrest warrants and two extradition petitions and prompted dozens of ongoing investigations, the group said.

After the end of the Second World War, hundreds of Nazis fled to Latin America where many governments helped them resettle. According to the Wiesenthal Center, 150 to 300 Nazi criminals reached Argentina.

A team of Israeli agents kidnapped Holocaust planner Adolph Eichmann in Argentina in 1960 and flew him back to Israel where he faced trial and was sentenced to death.

Josef Mengele, the Angel of Death from the Auschwitz concentration camp, escaped to Argentina with an International Red Cross passport and also lived in Uruguay and Paraguay before he died in Brazil in 1979.

Mercopress