



SIPA's Years-Long Investigation Resulted in Issuance and Confirmation of Indictment against 32 Individuals – Chronology of Events



A years-long investigation of the State Investigation and Protection Agency (SIPA) and other partner agencies in Bosnia and Herzegovina resulted in issuance of the indictment by the B&H Prosecutor's Office Special Department for Organised Crime, Economic Crime and Corruption within the case codenamed 'Lutka' against 32 individuals, members of the organised criminal group of Darko Elez, which was confirmed by the B&H Court on 4/9/2013.

Due to disturbed mutual criminal relations and desire for domination over the territory as well as passivity of police and judicial institutions the organised criminal groups were established in the areas of Sarajevo and Istočno Sarajevo in 2004 onwards. These organised criminal groups, with their brutality, unscrupulousness and organisation, surpassed previously known ways of criminal operations. In a short time period all that resulted in numerous first degree murders, robberies, extortions, causing general danger, violent behaviour and other criminal activities. All efforts of the police and to some extent of the district and cantonal prosecutor's offices, did not contribute to putting the situation under control, particularly after the acquittal of the Bijeljina District Court for double murder of Todorović couple in Pale, for which Đorđe Ždrale, Boris Govedarica and Miroslav Škobo, leaders of criminal activities in the area of Istočno Sarajevo, were charged.

After their acquittal, there was an open conflict between Ždrale's criminal group and opposing group led by Darko Elez, which subsequently resulted in a number of murders and attempted murders, causing general danger, blackmails, extortions and other illegal activities. Each member of the criminal groups of Đorđe Ždrale and Darko Elez, along with their organisers, was directly involved in the perpetration of criminal offences. These criminal groups did not emerge spontaneously, but were formed to commit specific criminal offences. Their members had specifically defined roles and their continuous criminal activity was threatening to undermine the security in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and seriously jeopardize the safety of all its citizens. At the beginning of 2006, after a dramatic appeal by the Management Board of the District Prosecutor's Office in Istočno Sarajevo, and at the initiative of the State Investigation and Protection Agency, the joint investigation teams (JIT) were established. The JITs were composed of the best investigators from the State Investigation and Protection Agency, Republic of Srpska Ministry of Interior and Sarajevo Canton Ministry of Interior. These joint investigation teams started to work under the supervision and orders of the Prosecutor's Office of B&H with the aim of detection and resolution of previously committed serious criminal offences and bringing their perpetrators before the relevant judicial authorities. The years-long exhausting joint investigations within the cases code named „Jahorina“, „Kargo“and „Lutka“resulted in disruption of the organised criminal groups of Đorđe Ždrale, Zijad Turković and Darko Elez as well as brining their organisers before the B&H judicial institutions that prosecuted them or the criminal



proceedings are about to be carried out against them for perpetrated criminal offences of murders, robberies, etc.

The work in the case codenamed „Lutka“ continuously lasted as of 2006, and included the collection of relevant operational data and evidence, crime scene investigations and interviewing a number of aggrieved individuals and witnesses. As of May 2012, the work in

this case was intensified and the investigative authorities managed to penetrate the criminal group as well as to collect irrefutable evidence based on which the operation carried out on 12/9/2012 was planned. This operation, which was carried out in the entire territory of



Bosnia and Herzegovina and involved over three hundred police officials of SIPA, RS Mol and Sarajevo Canton and Brčko District Mols, resulted in 28 searches of facilities and apprehension of 22 individuals brought into connection with perpetration of criminal offences of murders of Boris Govedarica, Vlatko Mačar, Milan Vlaškić and Rade Magazin, attempted murder of Đorđe Ždrale, robberies of PBS Bank and BH Post Office, causing general danger, money laundering and other

criminal offences provided for by the criminal laws of B&H and Entities. Within the subsequent actions of police officials of SIPA, RS Mol, and Sarajevo Canton Mol and in cooperation with the Prosecutor's Office of B&H, ten more individuals were arrested and a murder of Zoran Golub in Istočno Sarajevo, robbery of a money transport of Pavlovic International Bank in Han Pijesak as well as robbery of money from Istočno Sarajevo branch of Nova Banka a.d. Bijeljina were resolved.



The investigations within the 'Lutka' operation lasted until 28.8.2013, when the Prosecutor of the B&H Prosecutor's Office Special Department for Organised Crime, Economic Crime and Corruption issued an indictment against 32 individuals - members of the organised criminal group of Darko Elez, Bojan Cvijan and Anes

Kurbegović, who committed a number of the most serious criminal offences, set out in the criminal codes of B&H and entities, in the area of Sarajevo and Istočno Sarajevo in the period 2005-2009.

The accused persons are, inter alia, charged with:

1. First degree murder of Boris Govedarica committed in August 2007 near to a shopping centre in Lukavica. The victim was fired at from an automatic weapon i.e. from two automatic rifles firing more than 15 shots, which led to his immediate death. The murder took place at the crossroad of a busy street, which caused great threat to public safety.



2 First degree murder of Vladimir Mačar in Pale in January 2008 by an explosive device planted on the previously stolen vehicle. On that occasion Vladimir Mačar and Milan Vlaškić were immediately killed while an innocent bystander Rade Magazin was initially badly injured but subsequently died. Several other persons were also injured.



3. First degree murder of Zoran Golub in August 2008 at the "Sport" cafe in Istočno Sarajevo. The aforementioned person was killed when more than 40 shots were fired at him from two automatic rifles, which caused a great danger to the lives of all persons present in the facility.



4. Arrangement, planning, and two attempted murders of Đorđe Ždrale, committed during 2006 in the area of Istočno Sarajevo. During the first attempt he was badly wounded with several shots from a firearm.



5. Robbery of a money transport of Pavlovic International Bank from Bijeljina, which was committed in August 2005 in the area of Han Pijesak by way of intercepting a money transporting vehicle and stealing about 1.8 million BAM.
6. Attempted robbery of money amounting to about 2.2 million BAM from Nova Banka a.d. Bijeljina – Istočno Sarajevo branch in November 2005. The security guards, who were transporting, used their weapons after being shot at and the robbers were wounded in the shootout and fled in the direction of Sarajevo.
7. Robbery of a money transport of Privredna banka Sarajevo in the amount of 2.2 million Euros (about 4.4 million BAM), which was committed in Nedžarici in Sarajevo in June 2006, when the vehicle used for money transport to the airport was robbed.



8. Armed robbery of approximately 670,000 BAM from the B&H Post Office – Post Office 2 in Sarajevo, in June 2008 when the perpetrators, after the robbery, drove away in a van, which was subsequently burned.



During the course of the activities to document criminal activities of this organised criminal group, SIPA achieved a high level of police and inter-institutional cooperation at the level of Bosnia and Herzegovina, especially with the B&H Prosecutor's Office, Republic of Srpska MoI, Sarajevo Canton MoI, B&H Border Police and other authorities and relevant institutions in B&H and the region



including the Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Serbia and Western European countries particularly Germany and Austria. This cooperation is still ongoing and daily produces new results in terms of evidencing criminal offences, as well as in relation to the acknowledgment of the role of SIPA as a leader among police agencies in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the main partner when it comes to international police cooperation.

We point out that the organised criminal group of Darko Elez was operating for many years in Bosnia and Herzegovina and countries in the region committing numerous criminal offences on a daily basis and acquiring a large material gain which enabled them to exert their influence on the state and local government structures as well as the individuals from police institutions and media. All that turned this group into one of the most organised criminal groups in the region and beyond. This criminal group was strengthening every day standing out in its brutality and unscrupulousness, and threatening to rise above the system and cause serious consequences to the security of citizens and society as a whole. Therefore, the action of police officials under the given circumstances required the additional efforts in order to take conspiratorial and secure measures and actions and handle confidential information related to planning and implementation of the activities aimed at disruption of this criminal group.

This operation shed light on the most serious criminal offences committed by the members of the organised criminal group of Darko Elez who, for a long period of time, were exerting a pressure on the public and security and police structures of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The individuals charged within the scope of the operation codenamed "Lutka" are:

Darko Elez, Bojan Cvijan, Benan Dorić, Davor Mandić, Branimir Minić, Vladimir Pandurević, Vaso Ljububratić, Muhamed Ramić, Sead Robović, Edin Ahmetpahić, Davor Elez, Ljubiša Lalović, Marko Krajišnik, Slobodanka Tošić, Himzo Ćato, Dejan Vukosavljević, Nermin Tahirović, Elvira Kajević, Azima Kajević, Mehemed Kajević, Elvis Zlatić, Admir Ahmetpahić, Dragan Vujičić, Vladan Parađina, Dragan Jevtović, Benjamin Halilović, Milan Mitić, Dragan Obućina, Anes Kurbegović, Milosav Vesković, Slaviša Bobar and Mladen Mičin.

The Court of BiH confirmed the indictment in the case of Darko Elez and others on 4/9/2013. It is important to emphasise that SIPA with this operation struck a severe blow to the organised crime in Bosnia and Herzegovina and that the largest organised criminal group in post-Dayton Bosnia and Herzegovina was dismantled.