

Special Achievement Award
22nd Annual Conference of the International Association of Prosecutors

Beijing, China 13 September 2017
Remarks by Chief Prosecutor Dr. Serge Brammertz

Mr. President, Members of the Executive Committee, Mr. Secretary-General, dear colleagues,

It is my pleasure and privilege to accept this Special Achievement Award on behalf of the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

We are honored and humbled to be recognized by our colleagues and fellow prosecutors from around the world. Your professional respect and esteem is particularly meaningful to us.

If we have achieved credible results over the past twenty-four years, that is largely due to the dedication of our staff. Hundreds of prosecutors, investigators, analysts, interpreters and many others devoted their best efforts to obtain some measure of justice for the victims of the horrific atrocities committed during the wars in the former Yugoslavia. They came from over sixty-five different countries, including many of the prosecution services participating in this annual conference here today.

In three months, our Office will complete its mandate and close its doors. While we take pride in all that we have done, we are fully aware that impunity for international crimes very often remains the rule. We only need to look around the world today to see that the scope of human suffering in armed conflict is perhaps greater than any other time in recent history.

All of us gathered here know that the desire for justice is universal. Unfortunately, however, this universal desire is not universally answered. The reality is that millions of victims from today's armed conflicts have no realistic hope they will see justice for the crimes they have suffered.

During the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia and the genocide in Rwanda, the international community found the will to act against impunity by creating *ad hoc* tribunals. Today, that will is sadly frequently lacking.

We hear again today that achieving peace is more important than achieving justice.

As prosecutors, we must reject the false choice of peace or justice. The truth is we must have both. Order can only be built on a foundation of justice and accountability. That is true in our home countries, and it is true in societies suffering from armed conflict.

But we have also learned that international tribunals have their limitations in what they can achieve.

That is why in conclusion, my Office has one message for you: more and more national prosecutors have an important role to play in securing justice for atrocity crimes. Victims and perpetrators of these crimes may be present in your home countries, the latter hiding among

refugees. In your countries, there may be criminals who are fuelling and facilitating the crimes, through arms smuggling, trading in conflict minerals or hiding illicit financial flows. Terrorist groups like Daesh that are committing countless atrocities today depend on foreign fighters and supporters from every continent.

So all of us, international and national prosecutors, must join together to show today's victims of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide that they have not been forgotten, and that justice can be done. This is our professional obligation, and our responsibility to future generations.

Again, on behalf of the ICTY OTP, thank you for honoring us with this special achievement award.