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International  
Criminal Tribunal  
for the Former  
Yugoslavia

Tribunal Pénal  
International pour  
l'ex-Yougoslavie

# STATEMENT

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PROSECUTOR

The Hague, 11 July 2015

**Srebrenica 20th Anniversary Commemoration**  
**Srebrenica, Bosnia and Herzegovina**  
**11 July 2015**  
**Serge Brammertz, Chief Prosecutor**  
**International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia**

*Representatives of the Victims, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen*

This place is a permanent reminder of the immense suffering humans can inflict on one another. The survivors today know that better than anyone else.

Thousands of men and boys were killed. Tens of thousands of women, children and elderly were terrorized, abused and forced from their homes.

A group of men abused their power and authority to destroy the Bosnian Muslim community of Eastern Bosnia. Srebrenica was the culmination of a destructive campaign aimed at shattering the foundations of Bosnian Muslim communities across Bosnia and Herzegovina.

It was not a spontaneous military operation, nor was it the work of a few vengeful soldiers.

Genocide in Srebrenica was the result of a deliberate plan designed at the very highest leadership levels.

These are facts that we have repeatedly proved beyond reasonable doubt.

Denying the Srebrenica genocide is a factual misrepresentation and disregards the highest judicial decisions of two international courts. It is also an insult to the victims.

To respect the past, the victims and survivors, we must call Srebrenica by its name: genocide. To build the future, we must speak out with one voice when it is denied.

The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia has indicted 20 individuals for crimes committed in Srebrenica. Almost all have been convicted.

Radovan Karadžić and Ratko Mladić, who were first indicted for genocide in 1995, are now on trial. For the victims, they are the two men who most personified the hatred and evil that led to genocide.

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As prosecutors, we have argued in court that they are the most responsible for these crimes.

That they are on trial after more than a decade as fugitives is thanks to our joint efforts. The victims reminded us of our commitment to justice. And the international community used many different strategies to ensure that finding the fugitives remained a top priority.

This shows that if there is political consensus, international fugitives can be brought to justice.

But this was only one part of the vital role that the victims have played in the justice process.

More than 2000 witnesses from Bosnia and Herzegovina have testified in our trials. Women who lost their husbands, sons and fathers. The few men who miraculously survived the mass executions.

Without the victims, justice would not have been possible. Your courage and your determination are an example for all of us.

Now, national courts must continue the ICTY's work. Hundreds of cases remain to be prosecuted, including many in relation to Srebrenica. Suspects have fled to neighboring countries, and regional cooperation is essential to bring them to justice. I call on the international community to continue to support the accountability process.

The international community must also continue the search for missing persons that the ICMP and its regional partners began many years ago. The victims cannot move forward without the closure of finding their loved ones.

We must also assist the survivors to rebuild their lives. Much more remains to be done to provide them with the necessary support, including compensation.

Finally, I have learned in the last seven years since I took office that accepting the truth is the first step to reconciliation.

When there is ignorance, we must respond with education. And when there is denial, we must respond with affirmation.

Thank you.

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