

Remarks by High Representative/EU Special Representative Miroslav Lajčák At the Ceremony to Commemorate the Victims of the Genocide in Srebrenica



In 1905 George Santayana wrote that: *“Those who cannot remember the past are doomed to repeat it.”* Today we are gathered here not only to pay our respects to the families who are burying their loved ones, but also to remember the past in the hope we will never again have to repeat it. I say “we” because genocide is the worst crime against humanity, and a crime against humanity is a crime against all of us.

Yes, the killing stopped in 1995. But stopping the killing did not ensure the future of those who survived and those who have been born since. And while joining NATO and the European Union will provide for future security and prosperity, that will not in and of itself help us overcome this greatest of crimes against humanity.

Somewhere between Bosnia’s past and its future lies justice.

On this day when we remember, with sorrow and with resolution, the crime that was committed here I want to reiterate that the pursuit of justice will never be abandoned.

The first requirement of justice is to find and punish all of those who were involved in the genocide.

The second requirement is to work with the people of Srebrenica to rebuild their community.

The third requirement of justice is to ensure that Bosnia and Herzegovina as a whole moves conclusively out of the darkness into which it was pushed a decade and a half ago.

It has already come a long way and now stands on the very threshold of complete integration in Europe.

This summer we took a monumental step towards Europe with the signing of the SAA.

However, nothing will diminish the horror of what was done at Srebrenica 13 years ago. But we do not simply *think about* the past nor we have a right to stand by passively. We have an obligation to the dead not to make victims of the living.

We are under an obligation – all of us – to satisfy the demands of justice and at the same time to develop Bosnia and Herzegovina as a country that is fit for all its citizens, now and for the generations to come.

We honour those who are buried today; we stand in solidarity and in sympathy with their families. We mourn them as our own, because this was a crime against all humanity. We pray for all the dead and we renew our commitment to justice.