



Statement of the HR Valentin Inzko following the first-instance verdict in the Mladic case

People killed cannot be brought back to life, but truth and a sense of justice are the first steps towards reconciliation and a shared understanding of the past

The International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) today rendered its first-instance verdict in the case against the Chief of the Main Staff of the Army of Republika Srpska, General Ratko Mladic. General Mladic has been convicted of genocide, crimes against humanity, and violations of the laws and customs of war – for acts committed from 1992 until 1995 – and sentenced to life imprisonment.

The High Representative described today's verdict as an extremely important step toward bringing those individuals responsible for the most horrific crimes in Bosnia and Herzegovina to justice. "Crimes committed under Ratko Mladic's command, including genocide, brought enormous pain and suffering to everyone in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the consequences of which will be felt for many generations. The direct victims and survivors of these crimes serve as a constant reminder of why the ICTY was created, why its work is so important, and why justice is crucial to the healing processes of the entire society. I understand that for the victims and survivors, the wait for justice seemed too long, but I hope this verdict will provide them with some sense of closure and some sense of justice, because the need for justice and closure is timeless and universal."

The High Representative also called upon all authorities in BiH and all citizens to respect the verdict and refrain from politicizing it. "There are no bad nations, only bad individuals. I hope therefore that everyone will take this opportunity to recommit themselves to the reconciliation process. Justice does not *per se* bring reconciliation, but it is an essential first step in the quest for a shared understanding of the past and finding the full truth of the events from July 1995. This understanding is the path towards a secure and peaceful future," concluded the High Representative.