

Remarks by High Representative and EU Special Representative Valentin Inzko at the Memorial Ceremony for Victims of the Srebrenica Genocide



Life Built on Justice

Honored mothers and women of Srebrenica, dear relatives, brothers and sisters, honored grieving people.

We are gathered here, on the European Remembrance Day, to recollect once again– with sincerity and deepest sympathies – the atrocious genocide in Srebrenica.

We are also gathered here to exercise the oldest and most sacred human right – the right to a dignified funeral. Personally, I believe that the first funeral marked the beginning of human civilisation. And to prevent a funeral represents a fundamental break-up with civilisation.

When evil is done to one man it is done to all of us, because we are all part of a whole.

When we confront the genocide that was committed in Srebrenica sixteen years ago we must remember this.

The killers vented their hatred on the victims we are here to honour.

And they vented their hatred on all their fellow citizens who seek to live in solidarity and justice.

But good is not passive in the face of evil.

Good *actively* rejects evil.

Society is not helpless.

Society can actively and decisively advance an alternative to evil, an antidote to evil – a reality and life built on justice.

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Nothing can be built on genocide.

Nothing can be protected by genocide.

Hatred – and everything that flows from it – is in the end self-defeating.

The evil that showed itself in Srebrenica touched every home and family, every community and every ethnicity in this country; and most of all the victims of genocide and their families.

There may still be some who insist that killers are not killers, victims are not victims, the dead are not the dead.

But this perverse and obtuse denial – in the face of incontrovertible evidence – will be worn away by truth.

Truth *will* prevail – even among those who stubbornly hide from it.

We serve that truth by supporting the machinery and system of justice.

Several weeks ago one of the remaining fugitives from the International Criminal Tribunal – a man charged with directing the murders at Srebrenica – was sent to The Hague.

Justice has been slow, but justice *will* come. And according to Srđan Popović only a trial can establish the moral balance that was disrupted by crimes. According to him, a trial is necessary, not only because of the punishment, but in order for the society to show that it condemns the crime. The purpose of the punishment is for the society to show that it is capable of healing.

Those painful facts, that past, must not be ignored or forgotten. Because the past preserves vital resources for the

reconstruction of the present and the future.

On this solemn occasion, as a representative of the international and European family, I want to say to all of the bereaved, all who have suffered, all who have had to live with the legacy of this terrible evil:

We empathize with you.

We stand in solidarity with you.

We mourn with you.

We are one with you.

We again make this commitment in solidarity with all citizens who want nothing of hatred, who want to live in peace and justice. We make this commitment in confidence that good, not evil, truth, not lie, will prevail.