

High Representative Meets Srebrenica Family Representatives

Meeting representatives of the Srebrenica families' associations in Sarajevo late yesterday, the High Representative, Christian Schwarz-Schilling, underlined his long-standing close personal interest in the efforts of the people of Srebrenica to pursue justice.

The High Representative emphasised that exposing the truth behind all war crimes is a major part of fostering peace and reconciliation in Bosnia and Herzegovina . "Ensuring that those responsible face justice is a key element of this, as is the exhumation and identification of those still missing so that families can bury their dead with dignity," the High Representative said.

The High Representative expressed his full support for the work of the Srebrenica Foundation Board, and he called on the families' associations to present their ideas on the future structure of the Foundation, urging them to lobby with all levels of government to ensure that their concerns are addressed.

The High Representative also made it clear that the burden of effort must not be laid entirely on the shoulders of those directly affected by the events of July 1995. "BiH's institutions must take responsibility for supporting the survivors of the Srebrenica Massacre," he said. "Dealing with those terrible events is not just for those who suffered – the Municipal, Entity and State Governments must step forward and take up their responsibility for making progress in Srebrenica." He said it was "incumbent on the competent authorities not just to deal with the aftermath of the

terrible events that took place in and around Srebrenica but to give their full support to those who have chosen to return to their area.”

The High Representative undertook to visit the Srebrenica and the Potocari Memorial site, where he will meet with representatives of the families again. “When I visit at the end of this month I will want to learn more about the problems faced by returnees and what the local authorities responsible are doing to resolve them,” the High Representative said.