

Statement by the Senior Deputy High Representative Bernard Fassier after ceremony in Potocari

After attending Sunday's memorial and burial service at Potocari, Senior Deputy High Representative Bernard Fassier, who is responsible for the OHR's Rule of Law Pillar and who is the International Community's principal interlocutor with the RS Srebrenica Commission, issued the following statement on behalf of the High Representative.

"I and other members of the International Community were present at Srebrenica today to pay tribute to all the victims of the worst atrocity that has occurred in Europe since the end of World War II, to share the mourning of the families who lost their loved ones, to present our condolences, and to reaffirm our common determination to ensure that those responsible for the atrocity perpetrated here nine years ago (which the ICTY has qualified as genocide) are brought to justice.

"As the Senior Deputy High Representative charged with coordinating efforts to consolidate the rule of law, let me convey my deepest conviction that this country's successful evolution – through justice and reconciliation – requires all of us to use the lesson of this tragic past to look forward and to prepare and secure the future of the next generations.

"In this respect, the work of the RS Government Srebrenica Commission is an important step in the right direction, although more remains to be done. As important is the recent statement of the RS President with regard to this atrocity. I am happy that many people in BiH, including senior members of

the Bosniak community and of the Bosniak political parties acknowledge that Mr./ Cavic's comments could be a turning point and may indicate a new spirit that will help BiH move forward on this still long and still difficult road to reconciliation.

"I am also happy that today's speech by Mr. Tihic before the burial ceremony of 338 victims has been positive about the work of the Srebrenica commission and the recent comments of the RS political leadership."

"Today's ceremony only highlighted the importance of this. The victims and their families will not be forgotten. Justice must be done at the same time we can only escape the past when the truth is fully established, those responsible are tried and sentenced, and an apology is presented (this is no less important) when this apology is understood and accepted."