

High Representative decides on Srebrenica Cemetery and Monument Location

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, today issued a decision on the location of a cemetery for the victims of Srebrenica.

The Srebrenica Municipal Council in June this year unanimously agreed that a cemetery site should be found within the Srebrenica Municipality, but the commission formed could not agree on one site. It is a disgrace that five years after this terrible event there is no decision on a location for a cemetery and memorial to the dead and missing.

The High Representative had already indicated in his speech marking the fifth anniversary of the massacre that he would use his authority to ensure that such a site was established. In reaching his decision, the High Representative gave foremost consideration to the wishes of the vast majority of the families of the victims. The decision itself allocates a plot of land, located opposite the Battery Factory in Potocari, for use as a cemetery and memorial for those families of Srebrenica victims who wish to bury their relatives there.

The plot is to be held in trust until a final decision is reached on the land's ownership. Carl Bildt and Bianca Jagger have already agreed to be part of the International Advisory Group, which will assist the victims' families to plan the cemetery and monument, and to raise funds for this project. The High Representative will appoint other members following further discussions with the representatives of the Srebrenica Families Associations. This location signifies one of the most terrible moments in Bosnia and Herzegovina's recent history.

The High Representative feels that this is an important decision for the relatives of those killed, and those that survived. There is now a place where they can mourn their dead, and from where they, and the rest of Bosnia and Herzegovina, can try to come to terms with the past and build a future. Today the High Representative warned political parties on all sides that attempts to subvert this process will not be tolerated. This is a right that no one can deny these families, and a moral obligation of the International Community to the victims.