

# Statement by High Representative Valentin Inzko on the 26th Anniversary of the Srebrenica Genocide



Bosnia and Herzegovina has utterly changed since 1995 – but post-war recovery is not only about repairing physical damage. It is a complex process.

Recovery from violence, recovery from cruelty, recovery from crime – these are long journeys. They are often difficult. They may never be fully complete.

For 26 years, the women of Srebrenica have been an example to the rest of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the world. They have fought with determination and fortitude to find the remains of their fathers, husbands, brothers, and sons. Many, but not all, have buried their loved ones with dignity. They have joined survivors from every community to demand justice and truth.

Others in this country – a small minority of citizens – have been unable to move from beneath the long shadow of hatred and fear.

There are those who continue to deny the truth, those who insist – in the face of certifiable and well-documented fact – that Genocide did not happen.

People in denial are often impervious to reasoned argument. Yet, their denial harms others. It robs the living and the dead of their dignity. Their denial violates the fundamental principles of justice. It prevents the whole country from recovering from wounds inflicted a generation ago.

Genocide denial is a heavy burden that the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina should not have to bear.

Those who persist – after all the evidence that has been presented to the contrary – in clinging to a monstrous and irrational lie will not desist of their own volition. This is why, in my country, denial of the Holocaust and other Nazi atrocities was made a criminal offence.

Bosnia and Herzegovina needs a law that punishes and prevents Genocide denial. A law that deals with the glorification of war criminals.

Such a law should have been and should be enacted by the people's representatives, because it would reflect the will of BiH citizens – from every community – to separate themselves once and for all from the fear and hatred that fuelled the crimes of the 1990s.

On this sad anniversary, we honour the victims of Genocide and we stand in solidarity with the survivors. We renew our commitment to justice and truth, and we join decent men and women throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina in renouncing the evil that was done at Srebrenica.