

Statement of the HR Valentin Inzko following the first-instance verdict in the Karadžić case



Respect for victims and relatives, truth, justice and reconciliation must prevail

Today the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia rendered its first instance verdict in the case against Radovan Karadzic finding him guilty of Genocide, Crimes against Humanity and Violations of the Laws and Customs of War, and sentencing him to 40 years of imprisonment. Even after more than two decades, the brutality of these crimes still shocks the human conscience and offends the notion of human dignity.

High Representative Valentin Inzko reiterated his full support for the work and goals of the ICTY, established by the United Nations in 1993, in response to the mass atrocities being perpetrated in the region, including in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

“There is no reconciliation without truth and justice. There is no healing without allowing the victims and the witnesses to voice the horrors they saw and experienced,” said the High Representative.

“In the words of former German President Richard von

Weizsäcker, 'there is no such thing as the guilt or innocence of an entire nation. Guilt is, like innocence, not collective but personal.' And so the wheels of justice must turn. Democratic societies agree on this essential point. With this in mind, this judgement should help us, and give us strength, to look truth in the eye and to strengthen the culture of remembrance. Without truth and remembrance, there cannot be lasting reconciliation."

The High Representative also called on all authorities in BiH, in line with their responsibility to cooperate with the ICTY, to refrain from resorting to political posturing and from distorting the importance of justice served. Twenty years after the war, politicians should be forward looking and focused on the Euro-Atlantic future of BiH.

"Those who have consciously chosen to glorify war criminals, and to relativize evil, have excluded themselves from humanity's most basic values. And in so doing they have disqualified themselves from the civilised world and have to bear the consequences of doing so, such as isolation from the rest of the civilised world," High Representative Inzko said.

"After this verdict and the remembrance of the darkest times in Bosnia and Herzegovina, let us work to ensure that truth, freedom and reconciliation prevail," High Representative Inzko concluded. "We owe this to the victims and their relatives. We owe it to Bosnia and Herzegovina and all its citizens. Finally, we owe it to the future and the youth of this beautiful country."