



MICT

UNITED NATIONS
Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals

The Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals ("MICT" or "Mechanism") was established on 22 December 2010 by the United Nations Security Council to continue the jurisdiction, rights, obligations and essential functions of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda ("ICTR") and the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia ("ICTY") after the completion of their respective mandates. The MICT has two branches, one in Arusha, Tanzania, and one in The Hague, Netherlands.

STATEMENT

PRESIDENT

(Exclusively for the use of the media. Not an official document)

The Hague, 23 May 2018

Remarks on the Occasion of the Opening of the Sarajevo Information Centre on the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia

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International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals

23 May 2018

Your Excellency Mayor Skaka,

Distinguished Professor Komsic,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen:

President Theodor Meron of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals was, to his great regret, unable to be here today to join in this important occasion, but he has asked me, as his *Chef de Cabinet* and Principal Legal Advisor, to deliver the following remarks on his behalf.

The ICTY, as many of those here today know well, was a pioneering institution. The first international criminal court of the modern era, it demonstrated, in case after case, that accountability for some of the worst crimes imaginable is possible and amassed an unparalleled body of evidence concerning the tragic events and terrible crimes that took place throughout the region of the former Yugoslavia during the 1990s, evidence—ranging from maps and meeting minutes to wire intercepts and witness testimony—that played a central role in the Tribunal’s proceedings and in its judgements.

But for all that the ICTY accomplished and all the progress it helped to make in the broader fight to end impunity, it reflected, in many ways, an imperfect solution. The Tribunal’s work was carried out far from the communities and survivors most affected by its proceedings. The nature of its proceedings—reflecting a novel hybrid of common-law and civil-law traditions—may have seemed strange and puzzling to many. And its trials were conducted and its rulings issued in languages foreign to the former Yugoslavia.

It is in this context that I am particularly pleased that we are here today to open the Sarajevo Information Centre on the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

Not only is this Information Centre designed to give visitors direct access to documents and other materials drawn from the Tribunal’s proceedings and the opportunity to experience first-hand one of the ICTY’s courtrooms, but it does all of that *here*, in the heart of some of the communities most affected by its work, inviting each visitor to ask questions, to weigh arguments and information, and to reach his or her own conclusions.

The understanding and awareness borne of this process—borne of having open access to information and evidence drawn from the work of the ICTY and the freedom to inquire, to debate, and to study the Tribunal’s legacy—is vital for this generation and the generations to come if we are to truly learn

from our past and from the tragic events that engulfed this region during the 1990s and say, once and for all: “Never again”.

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Before closing, I wish to acknowledge with gratitude the presence of Judge Fausto Pocar, a valued colleague and former President of the ICTY, who led the ICTY’s efforts concerning information centres and was instrumental in bringing this project to fruition. And on behalf of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, I wish to extend my sincerest congratulations to Mayor Skaka, to Professor Komšić, and to their excellent colleagues who have worked tirelessly to make this Information Centre such a success and such an important contribution and landmark for this city and its community.

Thank you very much.
