



UNITED NATIONS

International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals

The International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals ("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") which closed in 2015 and 2017, respectively.

STATEMENT

PRESIDENT

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

The Hague, 10 July 2022

Judge Graciela Gatti Santana, President International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals Closing remarks at the "Srebrenica Heroines" Conference Sunday, 10 July 2022, Potočari

Excellencies,
Esteemed victims and survivors,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a real pleasure and privilege to be with you, at this Conference dedicated to honouring the unique experiences of women survivors of the Genocide in Srebrenica. This is my first opportunity to speak in public since assuming office as the President of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals just ten days ago, and it is also my first visit to your beautiful country. I am humbled to address you in Potočari, in this solemn place of sadness and memory, and to meet some of the extraordinary women here today.

And as the Mechanism's first woman President, what better way to start my Presidency than by participating in this special event and hearing the perspectives of so many women from different walks of life. Women survivors; women in civil society; in politics, diplomacy and law; women on the Bench. All of us together, reflecting on the incredible bravery, achievements and hardships of the Srebrenica Heroines.

It has been 27 years since the most terrible atrocities were committed here in Srebrenica, and yet this is the first Conference of its kind held in honour of the women, mothers, sisters and daughters who witnessed and survived the events of July 1995. What a wonderful opportunity this Conference is, then, and I trust you have made the most of every moment.

Women are among those worst affected by conflict, and this is especially true of the 1990s war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In Srebrenica, many of you lost loved ones in horrific circumstances. Many were also the victims of heinous crimes including sexual violence, assault and forcible transfer. As a woman, a wife and a mother myself, allow me to express my deepest compassion for the unimaginable loss and pain you have endured.

Despite facing personal and shared tragedy, for more than a quarter of a century, you – the women survivors – have carried the torch in relentlessly seeking justice and the truth. And you have inspired others with your

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resilience. Having dedicated three decades of my professional career to the rule of law, I greatly respect your determination. Indeed, in our own ways, everyone in this room has been striving to make a difference, to leave a mark, to uphold justice. We need more of these qualities in today's world, and this gathering is crucial in shining a light on your stories and allowing for shared insights.

It is frequently said that where women have an equal place in society, society as a whole benefits immensely. And likewise, when women actively participate in post-conflict processes, peace is more sustainable. This Conference is, therefore, also very timely and I hope it is a positive sign, not just for Bosnia and Herzegovina, but for other communities and countries that have been affected by conflict.

Recent initiatives from within the United Nations have also signalled a gradual, but heartening, shift in the visibility of women and their contributions. I refer, for example, to the Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 28 April 2021, proclaiming 10 March as the International Day of Women Judges. Further, only a few weeks ago, on 20 June 2022, the Assembly adopted a Resolution proclaiming 24 June as the International Day of Women in Diplomacy. In both Resolutions, the Assembly reaffirmed "that the active participation of women, on equal terms with men, at all levels of decision-making is essential to the achievement of equality, sustainable development, peace and democracy". The Mechanism was pleased to be able to mark both International Days in 2022 for the first time.

Finally, I wish to commend the "Mother's Scarf" art installation. In creating a sense of connection between women across the globe, its simple message of solidarity has touched many hearts and I am delighted to be a part of it.

In closing, I once more express my admiration for the women survivors of the Srebrenica Genocide. You are true heroines.

Thank you all for your attention.
