



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, 12 July 2023

## Opening Remarks at Conference: "Srebrenica Genocide: From Courtroom to Classroom" Wednesday, 12 July 2023

Excellencies, esteemed victims and survivors, ladies and gentlemen,

A very good morning to you all gathered here today at the Sarajevo Canton Memorial Fund. Allow me first to extend my heartfelt thanks to the numerous local and international partners who have not only made this Conference possible, but who have consistently demonstrated their support to our outreach activities. In particular, I would like to mention the European Union and Switzerland, including its Embassy in Sarajevo. I also want to acknowledge the Ministers of education and educational institutes in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the "Mothers of the Srebrenica and Žepa enclaves".

I commend the Mechanism Information Programme for Affected Communities for securing this debate which is so important. Yesterday marked 28 years of the Srebrenica Genocide. I had the honour to address the Commemoration in Potočari and express my solidarity with survivors and families of victims.

The solemn act of remembering preserves the integrity of the past against those who attempt to revise history for their own ends. There is an overwhelming body of evidence and unanimous rulings by the ICTY, the Mechanism, the ICJ and the Bosnian War Crimes Chamber that what happened in Srebrenica constitutes genocide. Let that word sink in. **Genocide.**

It is therefore crucial that future generations understand the complexities of the 1990s conflicts, and learn the truth of what happened. They must be made aware of the human stories behind the statistics, and be informed about the ways in which justice and accountability mechanisms can help prevent such atrocities from happening again.

This is where the judicial records of the ICTY and the Mechanism play a critical role. The primary sources available, including witness testimonies and exhibits, provide educators with a unique opportunity to involve students in critical thinking, empathy, and the pursuit of truth.

By incorporating these materials into teaching, and by relying on the established facts as contained in the judgements, educators can foster a deeper and better understanding of the recent history of the region and its lasting consequences.

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Such efforts contribute to countering denial and revisionism, which regrettably continue to gain momentum. That is why consolidating the achievements and legacy of the *ad hoc* Tribunals and the Mechanism, and making them more accessible, is one of the key priorities of my Presidency.

It is my personal conviction that education serves as the strongest foundation for resilient, inclusive, and peaceful societies. It allows us to stand up to hatred and intolerance. It is through education that we can ensure that the lessons from the conflicts are never forgotten, and empower the next generations to create a more just future.

I strongly support all of the teachers and educational institutions in this country and across the former Yugoslavia who are working towards these goals. And I am proud of the ongoing efforts of the Mechanism's Information Programme which have been instrumental in bringing about meaningful change. Since its inception in 2019, it has successfully trained over 600 history teachers from the region, equipping them with the necessary tools to incorporate judicially-established facts into educational material related to the conflicts of the 1990s.

I hope that today's Conference serves as a catalyst for further collaboration, dialogue, and action. I thank all of you for your presence and your willingness to engage with these issues. By being here, you are demonstrating a shared commitment to understanding and learning from the past, and working towards a brighter future. Thank you for your attention.

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