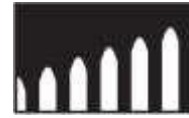




BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA
Permanent Mission
to the United Nations
New York



SREBRENICA
MEMORIAL
CENTER

REMINDER
Panel discussion
Memorialization of genocide: Justice, truth, healing
Case study Srebrenica

Date: 29 April 2024, 11 am
Venue: UNHQ, Room CR11

Agenda:

Short video

Welcome and opening:

H.E.Mr. Zlatko Lagumdžija, Permanent Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the UN

Panelists:

- Mr. Emir Suljagić, Director of the *Srebrenica Memorial Centre*
- Mrs. Munira Subašić, President of the Association “*Mothers of Srebrenica*”
- Mrs. Kerry Kennedy, President of the *Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Foundation* and founding member of the *Srebrenica Memorial Leadership Council*, via video link
- Ms. Tanya Domi, *Columbia University*, Harriman Institute, Adjunct Professor of International and Public Affairs
- Mr. Honore Gatera, Director of the Kigali Genocide Memorial Centre, via video link (TBC)
- Mrs. Sonat Birnecker Hart, Former Walter Benjamin Chair of German Jewish Cultural History at Humboldt University in Berlin, via video link, (TBC)

Q&A

Closing:

H.E. Dr. Zlatko Lagumdžija, Permanent Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the UN

Kindly RSVP by Friday, 26 April, COB at:
<https://forms.gle/5VgH4ESzRNtMTSWN8>

Concept Note

Memorialization of Genocide: Justice, Truth, Healing - Case Study Srebrenica

Background:

The war that followed the breakup of the former Yugoslavia claimed more than 100,000 lives in Bosnia and Herzegovina between 1992 and 1995, mostly of Bosnian Muslims, and displaced more than two million others. The list of atrocities committed during that time is overwhelming, but Srebrenica, without a doubt, became its darkest chapter. Previously declared as the UN “safe area,” 8,372 women, men, and children were systematically executed in July 1995 in and around the town of Srebrenica, the largest atrocity on European soil since the Second World War, adjudicated as genocide by international courts. It stands as a harrowing reminder of the consequences of unchecked ethnic hatred and political failure.

This panel discussion aims to delve into the multifaceted dimensions and importance of memorializing genocide, with a particular focus on the Srebrenica genocide, not least in light of the proposed draft resolution on designating 11 July as **International Day of Reflection and Commemoration of the 1995 Genocide in Srebrenica**.

Memorialization of Genocide:

Remembering is a basic human instinct, and memory cannot be imprisoned—it will usually come out in one form or another. The challenge is to find ways to harness memory to learn lessons from the past to avoid repeating it.

Memorialization is a process that satisfies the desire to honor those who suffered or died during the conflict, to examine the past, and to address contemporary issues. The memorialization of genocide rests at the complex intersection of justice, truth, and healing for affected communities and the global collective conscience. It can either promote social recovery after violent conflict ends or crystallize a sense of victimization, injustice, discrimination, and the desire for revenge. It is important to be firmly based on judicial determination, as **memorialization can also be shaped by those in power in a highly political process**.

1. Justice: Memorialization seeks to address the quest for justice by commemorating the victims, holding perpetrators accountable, and preventing future atrocities. It raises questions about legal accountability, prosecution, and reparations for survivors and their descendants.

2. Truth: Memorialization serves as a tool for historical truth-telling, challenging denialism, and preserving collective memory. It involves documenting testimonies and raising memorials. Most importantly, however, it must be used to **educate** future generations about the atrocities committed, with the critical role of the judicial records in helping educators foster a deeper and better understanding, ensuring that the lessons from the 1990s conflicts are never forgotten.

3. Healing: Memorialization fosters collective healing by providing spaces for mourning, reconciliation, and solidarity. It acknowledges the pain and trauma endured by survivors and communities, offering avenues for remembrance and catharsis.

The memorialization of genocide, particularly the case study of Srebrenica, presents a compelling platform for exploring the intersections of justice, truth, and healing. Through robust debate and dialogue, this forum aims to deepen understanding, foster empathy, and chart a path toward meaningful commemoration and reconciliation.

The mothers of Srebrenica, for almost 30 years, have been tirelessly working on not only preserving the memory and seeking justice but also helping the community in healing. It is high time for the UN to share that burden and continue both preserving the memory and memorizing this sad day in its history. For the sake of memory, but also as a warning. As the UN Secretary-General noted in 2023 - “A generation since the genocide, we must never forget what happened – and ensure future generations always remember.”

Questions to consider:

1. Role of Justice in Memorialization: Should memorialization efforts prioritize legal justice through prosecution and accountability, or is reconciliation more important for healing and moving forward?

2. Challenges of Truth-Telling: How can memorialization confront historical revisionism and denialism effectively? What role should education and documentation play in preserving the truth of genocide?

3. Healing and Reconciliation: Can memorialization contribute to reconciliation between divided communities, or does it risk perpetuating divisions and resentments? How can memorialization efforts be inclusive and respectful of diverse perspectives?

4. Ethical Considerations: What are the ethical implications of memorialization, especially concerning representation, appropriation, and the commodification of trauma?

5. International Responsibility: To what extent should the international community be involved in memorialization efforts for genocides such as Srebrenica? What are the responsibilities of neighboring countries, international organizations, and global citizens?