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Our Story, Our Promise and a call to uphold the lessons of the Srebrenica genocide

United Nations observes the International Day of Reflection and Commemoration of the 1995 Genocide in Srebrenica with a solemn commemoration in the General Assembly

New York, 8 July 2025 – “Today, as we remember, we must also confront reality. After Srebrenica, the world said – once again – “Never Again”. Yet, hate speech is on the rise again – fueling discrimination, extremism, and violence. We see the glorification of war criminals. We see the same dangerous currents that once led to atrocity crimes. We cannot ignore these warning signs”, the United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres stressed today in his opening remarks at the observance of the International Day of Reflection and Commemoration of the 1995 genocide in Srebrenica, and the 30th anniversary of the genocide. The Secretary-General called on every Member State to fulfil their shared responsibility: to uphold the lessons of Srebrenica, to preserve historical truth, and to protect human dignity.

Mr. Guterres’ message was delivered by his Chef de Cabinet, Mr. Earle Courtenay Rattray, at the solemn commemoration held at United Nations Headquarters, in the General Assembly Hall. The observance began with a minute of silence honouring the victims of the genocide committed in Srebrenica.

The Outreach Programme on the Srebrenica Genocide and the United Nations, together with the Permanent Mission of Bosnia and Herzegovina, organized the high-level commemoration under the official theme “Our Story, Our Promise” to bring to light stories of the survivors, the cross-generational impact of the genocide on the generations born after and support a collective effort to ensure that the promise of “never again” truly means never again. Mr. Robert Skinner, on behalf of Melissa Fleming, Under-Secretary-General for Global Communications, hosted the observance.

Addressing the General Assembly on behalf of the Association of Mothers of Srebrenica and Zepa, Ms. Munira Subašić, the President of the Association, reminded all of the excruciating losses that thousands of mothers have endured during the genocide, while the world stood silent. “When you kill a child, you kill a part of the mother. I would never want it to happen to anyone. But Mothers did not stop, Mothers did not wait for someone to bring them justice. They fought for justice and accountability. As mothers, they have raised their remaining children without hate. Today, they are doctors, engineers and speak many languages. I am sending a message to all mothers of the world to learn from us that children are born to love and must be raised with love. Differences are good, but divisions are never. Learn from us so, so that anything that could be leading to a genocide anywhere can be stopped. I am asking you to join me in fight against injustice, against genocide and against denial of genocide.”

Ms. Mirela Osmanović, speaking as a young person growing up in the aftermath of the genocide and today working for the Srebrenica Memorial Center shared how the loss of her two brothers will forever be profoundly felt: “In our home, they never really left. They were present in every corner — in the silence at dinner, in the words left unspoken, in the eyes of my parents. We’ve heard the phrase “never again” repeated many times. And yet, we’ve also learned that words alone are not enough. Today, 30 years later, we carry that lesson with us. We do not ask for pity. We ask to be heard. We are not a footnote in history.

We are not here only to remember — but to remind. We speak today for those who can't. We speak for those who still suffer in silence, and for those not yet born who deserve a future without fear."

The agency of young people was illustrated by Ms. Mirela Osmanović who spoke at the observance, and Ms. Uma Čizmić, a 16-year-old violinist who performed an excerpt from "*Srebrenica Inferno*". They illustrated the strength, success and dedication of the generation which grew up after the horrors of the genocide to keep the history of Srebrenica alive.

The Member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, His Excellency Mr. Denis Bećirović underlined that the "strongest power is the truth. Our deepest inspiration are the future generations to whom we must leave a safe Bosnia and Herzegovina. Let us show determination and strength to bring life back to Srebrenica and this part of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Let Srebrenica be a place of life and of the future. Let justice be born from the fight for truth. Let genocide never happen again, anywhere to anyone."

Speaking in her capacity as the Acting Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Ms. Pramila Patten expressed hope that the annual commemoration of the International Day will open a safe space for reflection and for dialogue to continue understanding and learning from the past, as "we owe it to new generations across the region of the Western Balkans, who deserve and want to live free from the shadows of warmongering and divisions."

The President of the United Nations General Assembly, Mr. Philémon Yang, added that the lessons of Srebrenica must guide our efforts to prevent such crimes, everywhere, and every time: "Future generations must be equipped to understand what happened, why it happened, and how it was allowed to happen. Only then can they uphold the values of peace, tolerance, and human dignity. Education remains our strongest defense against the erosion of memory."

Closing the commemoration, Permanent Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina, His Excellency Mr. Zlatko Lagumdžija, thanked the dignitaries and speakers, and reminded everyone that [General Assembly Resolution A/RES/78/282](#) adopted in 2024 gave additional strength to continue to educate on the pathway to truth, justice, reconciliation and genocide prevention everywhere in the world. The Permanent Representative showed the "flower of Srebrenica", small white knitted flower, that is a token of remembrance and "a symbol that is tirelessly reminding us of the simple message that Srebrenica must never be repeated by anyone, anywhere."

The International Day of Reflection and Commemoration of the 1995 Genocide in Srebrenica was established in 2024, pursuant to the [General Assembly Resolution A/RES/78/282](#), which also established the Outreach Programme on the Srebrenica genocide, coordinated by the Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide and the Department of Global Communications. As the United Nations Secretary-General stressed in his message on the day, "this day is not only a moment of reflection. It is a call to vigilance and action. "

Find the recording of the entire [high-level commemoration here](#).

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