



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, 23 October 2020

Judge Carmel Agius, President
International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals
Remarks for opening of exhibition at the Sarajevo Information Centre:
'Showcasing the Work and Contribution of the ICTY'
23 October 2020

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

A very good evening to you all. I wish I could be there with you in person. My name is Carmel Agius and I am the President of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (Mechanism), the successor organisation to both the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR).

As some of you may know, I previously served for sixteen years as a Judge at the ICTY, and I was the final ICTY President from November 2015 until the Tribunal's historic closure in December 2017. It is therefore my sincere pleasure to address you on the occasion of the inauguration of the important new exhibition, *'Showcasing the Work and Contribution of the ICTY'*, at Sarajevo's City Hall.

While I am recording this message from the Mechanism's premises in The Hague, I can vividly recall the majesty of the City Hall building. Its history and stunning beauty project a powerful message about the spirit of this town and the resilience of its people. Once a grand university library, the City Hall building was shelled and burned to the ground during the war, only to rise again from its ashes thanks to the persistence, and painstaking efforts, of Sarajevo's citizens and many friends.

I am particularly grateful to the City of Sarajevo for hosting the first-ever Information Centre on the ICTY and thereby responding to the spirit of United Nations Security Council resolution 1966, which referred to the establishment of such centres. The Information Centre, housed in the City Hall building, provides unparalleled access to public records of the ICTY archives. In doing so, it plays a most valuable role in promoting and preserving the ICTY's legacy. This significant project would not have been possible without the commitment and continuous support of the City of Sarajevo, whom I thank wholeheartedly.

The exhibition that opens today will be a permanent installation. It represents the determination of the City of Sarajevo and the staff of the Information Centre to explore innovative ways of presenting the work of the ICTY to anyone interested in knowing more. With displays featuring ICTY judgements, as well as judicially-established facts, excerpts from witness testimony, and photographs, this exhibition will provide a fantastic overview of some of the ICTY's court proceedings and main achievements, and will demonstrate just how ground-breaking the ICTY was, as the first international criminal tribunal since Nuremberg and Tokyo.



In addition, the exhibition will offer a unique opportunity for visitors to learn about the conflicts of the 1990s and to honour the memory of the victims. It is indeed our hope that the exhibition will inspire all those who engage with the materials to reflect on the horrors of war, the universal value of human life, and the importance of the rule of law.

Finally, I wish to emphasise the crucial significance of safeguarding the ICTY's legacy at a time when Bosnia and Herzegovina, along with other countries of the former Yugoslavia, is experiencing serious and open resistance to reconciliation with the past. It is particularly concerning that the blatant denial of crimes, and even the celebration of convicted war criminals, are still very much present in the region. Narratives of this kind serve only to deepen the gap between communities and slow down the already complicated processes of post-conflict recovery. It is my sincere hope that the exhibition we are opening today will help to counter such misinformation and denial – a hope that I know is shared by the organisations that support the work of the Centre, including the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, the exhibition's generous sponsor.

To conclude, I invite you all to view this permanent new exhibition as an opportunity to actively learn, discuss, and remember. We owe this much to the innocent victims of the armed conflicts in the former Yugoslavia.

Thank you.
