



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on 18th Anniversary of Srebrenica Genocide

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
July 11, 2013

Today, the 11th of July, marks the 18th anniversary of genocide in Srebrenica. It is a somber reminder of the lasting impact of this tragedy and the ongoing efforts to bring closure to the families and friends of victims.

At this time, I wish to reiterate Secretary Kerry's statement on the 18th anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide:

"On behalf of President Obama and the American people, I join the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina today in honoring the memory of those lost in the horrific act of genocide in Srebrenica in July 1995, which stole the lives of over 8,000 innocent people.

As we know from history, truth and reconciliation are essential to moving beyond the past towards a better tomorrow. We applaud those who continue to seek justice for the victims and work to ensure that all citizens have the right to return and to live peacefully in their pre-war homes.

We reject efforts to rewrite or manipulate history, deny the genocide, or negate Bosnia and Herzegovina's multi-ethnic character. We must always challenge falsehood, we must combat it, and we must counter it with truth, wisdom, and compassion.

The fragility of a just society means that we have an obligation to be eternally watchful against the forces arrayed against it. Even as we seek justice for those who have been lost, we must also pay tribute to their memories by promoting a legacy of tolerance and mutual understanding for generations yet to come. We call upon all citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina to build bridges between communities and to work together towards full integration into the Euro-Atlantic community. On July 11th, we stand by you in mourning, and we stand by you every day focused on building a stronger future."

In addition, I would like to note that despite this sorrow and suffering, the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina are making commendable efforts to move away from the tragic memory of the past, to seek reconciliation, and to focus on their shared future. In this regard, we commend the OSCE Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and its Field Office in Bratunac in particular, for its efforts to promote cooperation and compromise among the citizens of Srebrenica. But there is much work to be done.

In respect of this anniversary, the United States calls on all leaders in the region to redouble their efforts at reconciliation, and to work together to help ensure a cooperative and prosperous future for all their citizens.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.