
Open Letter to the UK Presidency of the EU on the occasion of the ceremony to mark the tenth anniversary of the massacre of Srebrenica

The Rt Honourable Jack Straw
President-in-office of the Council of the European Union

Brussels, 11 July 2005
B 474

Dear Mr. Straw,

In view of today's ceremony commemorating the tenth anniversary of the Srebrenica massacre, Amnesty International calls on the European Union to ensure that EUFOR finally shows the resolve to detain those indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and hand them over to the ICTY.

While Amnesty International shares the view expressed by the UK's Europe Minister Douglas Alexander at the European Parliament in Strasbourg on 7 July 2005 that the ultimate responsibility for bringing to justice those responsible for the genocide committed in Srebrenica lies with the local authorities, we are disappointed that the UK Presidency's statement to the EP failed to acknowledge the responsibility of European Union Forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina to search, arrest and transfer the perpetrators of these crimes to the ICTY.

In taking over from the NATO-led Stabilization Force (SFOR) in December 2004, the EU was entrusted with the mandate to actively seek those indicted by the ICTY for genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity, and coordinate its activities with the remaining NATO forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina where appropriate, with a view to arresting the suspects and transferring them to the Tribunal's custody. But while the Dutch EU Presidency in December 2004 assured Amnesty International that EUFOR would provide support to the ICTY, no major indictee has since been apprehended by EUFOR. Nor is there any indication that EUFOR is actively trying to fulfil this part of its duties under the Dayton Peace Agreement.

While EUFOR joint operations with the local police forces have in some cases resulted in arrests of suspected war criminals indicted by local courts, all 10 suspects indicted by the ICTY, including former Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic and former Bosnian Serb generals Ratko Mladic and Zdravko Tolimir are still free and believed to be in Republika Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina, or in Serbia.

In addressing the European Parliament last week, the UK Presidency recalled the international community's failure to provide the people of Srebrenica with adequate protection from the organised and systematic killing of around 8000 Bosniak men and boys.

With today's ceremony to mark the tenth anniversary of what has been described as the biggest atrocity in Europe since the end of the Second World War, Amnesty International calls on the European Union not to fail the people of Srebrenica a second time by standing by while indicted war criminals roam seemingly untouchable on territory controlled by EU forces.

We urge you to send the families of the victims of Srebrenica a message of hope that the EU will do everything in its power to end their painful wait for those who killed their husbands and sons ten years ago to be brought to justice.

Yours sincerely,



Dick Oosting
Director
Amnesty International EU Office

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Ministers of Foreign Affairs of EU Member States

Mr. Javier Solana, High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy

Mr. Josep Borrell, President of the European Parliament

Mr. Ollie Rehn, European Commissioner for Enlargement

Lord Ashdown, High Representative/EU Special Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina

Ambassadors of EU Member States to the Political and Security Committee