



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

# **On the Conviction of Radovan Karadžić by the UN International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia**

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
April 7, 2016

The March 24 conviction of Radovan Karadžić on ten counts, including genocide, crimes against humanity, and violations of the laws or customs of war, is an important step toward holding to account the individuals responsible for the tremendous suffering of the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The United States urges all members of the international community to respect the decisions of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and dedicate themselves to continued reconciliation and peaceful coexistence. We respect the Tribunal's judicial independence and strongly support its work and mandate to investigate and try some of history's most horrific crimes.

We hope the decision can provide some sense of justice and closure to the victims and their families, who must not be forgotten. As President Obama said during the 20th anniversary of the Srebrenica Genocide, "Only by fully acknowledging the past can we achieve a future of true and lasting reconciliation. Only by holding the perpetrators of the genocide to account can we offer some measure of justice to help heal their loved ones. And only by calling evil by its name can we find the strength to overcome it."

Promoting accountability for those accused of atrocities remains a longstanding policy of the United States. With its decision, the ICTY trial chamber has found Karadžić, the war-time political leader of Bosnian Serbs, criminally responsible for a number of crimes that still shock the conscience. His conviction serves as a poignant reminder of the urgent, ongoing need to confront evil in all its forms, and to stand up for human rights, dignity, and tolerance. The decision from the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia also sends a clear message to other brutal leaders in the world that their crimes will not be forgotten, and that one day they too will be held to account.

As OSCE participating States, we have embraced a concept of comprehensive security, recognizing that the protection of human rights and human dignity is inseparable from the preservation of peace and security. And, in order to give life to that concept, we have solemnly pledged to uphold principles and commitments to one another and to the people of the OSCE region.

In that spirit, we are encouraged by those leaders in Bosnia and Herzegovina who, despite strong beliefs either in favor of or in opposition to the trial chamber's decision, limited their political rhetoric and did not use opportunities to wantonly fan nationalist flames. Reconciliation is a long and difficult process that begins with restraint. Similarly, we appreciate the comments of Serbian political leaders to reject nationalist, isolationist policies

of the past, and focus on the need for progress, regional cooperation, and European integration. The United States also welcomes the Serbian government's statement on March 24 expressing deep regret for all victims of the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, and condemning equally the crimes committed by Serb forces and those committed against Serbs in both Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Finally, the United States applauds the decision by Serbian authorities to arrest and transfer Radovan Karadžić to the Hague ten years ago, which marked an important milestone in the pursuit of justice for the victims and toward reconciliation for the Balkans.

The United States remains a steadfast partner of Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and all states in the region. From helping build security through the Dayton Peace Accords to supporting the transition from conflict to recovery, the United States is committed to the development of a region where citizens are able to live as neighbors in peace and with respect for the rights of all.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.