



**UNITED NATIONS  
PRESS RELEASE**

**Statement by Adama Dieng, Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, on the conviction of Radovan Karadzic for genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity**

(New York, - 24 March 2016) The Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Adama Dieng, expressed his satisfaction at today's verdict by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) against Radovan Karadzic, who was President of the Republika Srpska and Supreme Commander of the Bosnian Serb Army from April 1992 to July 1996. Mr. Karadzic has been found guilty of ten out of eleven charges against him, including charges of genocide for the 1995 Srebrenica massacre, war crimes for taking hostage United Nations peacekeepers serving in the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), and war crimes and crimes against humanity during the siege of Sarajevo by the Bosnian Serb Army. "Today is an historic day. The verdict by the ICTY against Radovan Karadzic sends a clear message that impunity will not prevail and that no one is above the law."

Special Adviser Dieng paid his respect to the victims of the crimes committed by Mr. Karadzic and expressed full solidarity with them. "This verdict renders justice to the survivors and the families of victims of the atrocity crimes committed by Karadzic. Nothing will return their loved ones to them but they can now have the comfort of knowing that those crimes will not go unpunished." At the same time, he stressed that today's verdict "is not only about the past but is also about the future. Accountability constitutes a critical component of prevention and also an important step along the path to national post-crisis reconciliation." In his view, "this verdict will assist the entire region to think about what happened, learn the lessons of the past and chart a future that fully acknowledges the past."

Special Adviser Dieng underlined that the impact of today's verdict would be felt well beyond Bosnia-Herzegovina and the region. "This verdict will resonate across the world and is a warning to all those who are committing or condoning the commission of acts that can incite or constitute atrocity crimes: it sends the message that wherever and whoever you are, sooner or later you will also face the weight of justice."

In his view, this verdict is also important because impunity has become norm in so many cases and is having a direct impact on the failure to prevent the escalation of crises. "It is abundantly clear when we look at events of the last decades that absence of accountability increases the risk that atrocity crimes will be committed. Let us spare no effort to ensure that all necessary measures are taken to facilitate access of every single victim to impartial and independent justice." In this regard, the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide reiterated his full support for the work of the ICTY, which has prosecuted the most serious international crimes committed in Europe since the Nuremberg trials, and for the work of the International Criminal Court and other international tribunals. He called on all Member States to abide by their obligations under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and enact the necessary legislation that will allow these crimes to be prosecuted at the national level, in a manner fully compliant with fair trial standards.

*For media queries please contact:*

Mario Buil-Merce

United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect

<http://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/adviser/>

Tel: +1 917 367 5001

Email: [buil-merce@un.org](mailto:buil-merce@un.org)