

Thursday 9 July 2015

P8_TA(2015)0276

Srebrenica commemoration

European Parliament resolution of 9 July 2015 on the Srebrenica Commemoration (2015/2747(RSP))

(2017/C 265/17)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its resolutions of 7 July 2005 ⁽¹⁾ and of 15 January 2009 ⁽²⁾ on Srebrenica,
 - having regard to the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, of the European Convention on Human Rights and of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, recognising the right of everyone to life, liberty and security of person and to freedom of thought, conscience and religion,
 - having regard to the Stabilisation and Association Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), of the other part, which was signed in Luxembourg on 16 June 2008 and entered into force on 1 June 2015,
 - having regard to UN Security Council Resolutions 827 of 25 May 1993, 1551 of 9 July 2004 and 1575 of 22 November 2004,
 - having regard to Rule 123(2) and (4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas 11 July 2015 marks the 20th anniversary of the act of genocide and ethnic cleansing that took place in and around Srebrenica during the Bosnian War, which should serve as a fresh reminder of the dangers of extreme forms of nationalism and intolerance in society, further exacerbated in the framework of war;
- B. whereas on 11 July 1995 the Bosnian town of Srebrenica, which had been proclaimed a safe area by UN Security Council Resolution 819 of 16 April 1993, was captured by Bosnian Serb forces led by General Ratko Mladić, acting under the authority of the then President of the Republika Srpska, Radovan Karadžić;
- C. whereas, during several days of carnage after the fall of Srebrenica, more than 8 000 Muslim men and boys, who had sought safety in this area under the protection of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), were summarily executed by Bosnian Serb forces commanded by General Mladić and by paramilitary units, including irregular police units; whereas nearly 30 000 women, children and elderly people were forcibly expelled in a massive-scale ethnic cleansing campaign, making this event the biggest war crime to take place in Europe since the end of the Second World War;
- D. whereas the tragic events of Srebrenica left deep emotional scars on the survivors and created long-lasting obstacles to political reconciliation among ethnic groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH);
- E. whereas the Srebrenica massacre was recognised as genocide by both the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in Appeals Judgment, *Prosecutor v. Radislav Krstić*, Case No.: IT-99-33 of 19 April 2004, and the International Court of Justice in the Case concerning Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (*Bosnia and Herzegovina v. Serbia and Montenegro*) of 27 February 2007, p. 127, § 297 (ICJ);
- F. whereas multiple violations of the Geneva Conventions were perpetrated by Bosnian Serb forces against the civilian population of Srebrenica, including deportations of thousands of women, children and elderly people and the rape of a large number of women;

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 157 E, 6.7.2006, p. 468.

⁽²⁾ OJ C 46 E, 24.2.2010, p. 111.

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- G. whereas, in spite of the efforts made to discover and exhume mass and individual graves, the bodies of nearly 1 200 men and boys from Srebrenica have not yet been located and identified;
- H. whereas in 1999 the UN Secretary-General in his report on the fall of Srebrenica declared that the UN failed to implement its mandate, especially with regard to the protection of the so-called 'safe areas', and thus shares responsibility;
- I. whereas the EU is built on peaceful coexistence and committed cooperation between its members; whereas one of the main motivations for the European integration process is the will to prevent the recurrence of wars and crimes against international humanitarian law in Europe;
- J. whereas on 30 January 2015 the ICTY upheld the sentences of five high-ranking Bosnian Serb army officers convicted for their involvement in the 1995 Srebrenica genocide; whereas some of the convicted officers reported directly to former Bosnian Serb army leader Ratko Mladić, who is currently on trial at the ICTY for crimes including genocide;
1. Commemorates and honours all the victims of the Srebrenica genocide and of all the atrocities during the wars in the former Yugoslavia; expresses its condolences to and solidarity with the families of the victims, many of whom are living without final confirmation of the fate of their relatives;
 2. Condemns in the strongest possible terms the genocide in Srebrenica; solemnly declares that such horrendous crimes must never happen again and states that it will do everything in its power to prevent such acts from recurring; rejects any denial, relativisation or misinterpretation of the genocide;
 3. Emphasises the need for political representatives in Bosnia and Herzegovina to acknowledge the past in order to work successfully together towards a better future for all citizens of the country; highlights the important role which neighbouring countries, religious authorities, civil society, art, culture, the media and educational systems can play in this difficult process;
 4. Stresses the importance of the work done by the ICTY and the need to take all necessary measures to accelerate the trials and appeals and bring them to an end without undue delay; reiterates that greater attention needs to be paid to war crime trials being prosecuted at domestic level;
 5. Reiterates the EU's commitment to the European perspective and further accession process of BiH and all Western Balkan countries; believes that regional cooperation and the European integration process are the best way to promote reconciliation and to overcome hatred and divisions;
 6. Urges the development of educational and cultural programmes that promote an understanding of the causes of such atrocities and raise awareness about the need to nurture peace and to promote human rights and interreligious tolerance; expresses its support for civil society organisations such as the Association of Mothers of Srebrenica and Žepa Enclaves for their pivotal role in raising awareness and building a broader basis for reconciliation among all citizens of the country;
 7. Regrets that the UN Security Council, which has the primary responsibility for maintenance of international peace and security, failed to pass a resolution commemorating the Srebrenica genocide. This is especially regrettable, as the International Court of Justice, the UN's primary judicial body, has determined that the crimes committed in Srebrenica were genocide;
 8. Strongly welcomes the decision of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, taken unanimously, to proclaim the 11th of July as Day of Mourning in Bosnia and Herzegovina;
 9. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and Commission, the governments of the Member States, the Government and Parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina and its entities, and the governments and parliaments of the countries of the Western Balkans.
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