



CROATIAN WORLD CONGRESS – HRVATSKI SVJETSKI KONGRES

NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations

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Committee for Education, Culture, and Socio-Political Affairs

June 4, 2026

**H.E. António Guterres**

Secretary-General of the United Nations

**The Members of the United Nations**

**Security Council**

**Mr. Serge Brammertz**

Chief Prosecutor of the International Residual Mechanism

for Criminal Tribunals (IRMCT)

**Appeal to the Hague-based International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals and Domestic  
Judicial Institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina for Equal Treatment of War Victims of All Three  
Constituent Peoples in Bosnia and Herzegovina**

The Croatian World Congress, a global Croatian association registered with the UN, hereby protests against the selective approach of the Tribunal for war crimes in the former Yugoslavia, and particularly against the conduct of Serge Brammertz, the Chief Prosecutor of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals in The Hague.

On April 16, 2026, Sarafina Lauš from the Travnik village of Čukle passed away at the age of 86. She was a woman whose husband Ivo (b. 1939) and three sons, Dragan (b. 1959), Fabijan (b. 1961), and Miroslav (b. 1971), were killed literally on their doorstep in June 1993 by members of the Army of BiH, a predominantly Bosniak army. Following this horrific loss, she ended up in a detention camp, first in Čukle and later in Zenica.

The murder of her husband and three sons, as well as the torture she endured during her 11 months of captivity, remain unpunished—like the majority of crimes committed against Croats in BiH.

Neither the Hague Tribunal nor the domestic judiciary have filed indictments against the perpetrators and order-givers of the crime that stripped Sarafina of her three sons and husband, despite the fact that Sarafina testified in The Hague. During her lifetime, this woman would say without hatred or bitterness: "God will judge them!" We call upon the earthly courts to judge them as well.

Her example confirms—and there are multiple examples like this—that the Hague Tribunal was simply not interested in the Croatian victims of the past war in BiH. This practice has been continued by the domestic judiciary, which even suspended the investigation against the perpetrators whom Sarafina personally knew.

On May 5, 2026, during Serge Brammertz's visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina, *"a meeting was held between representatives of war crimes victims' associations, which was marked by discussions on key issues of transitional justice and dealing with the past. On that occasion, the Chief Prosecutor of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals in The Hague met with Munira Subašić and Kada Hotić, representatives of the "Movement of Mothers of Srebrenica and Žepa Enclaves" Association and the "Association of Victims and Witnesses of Genocide."*

*"After meetings with representatives of the judiciary, the diplomatic community and victims' organisations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, meetings with victims and survivors are the most important because they remind us of the significance of prosecuting war crimes," Brammertz added (radiosarajevo.ba, May 5, 2026).*

On this occasion, the **Coordination of Homeland War Associations of the Croatian Defence Council in Bosnia and Herzegovina** issued a sharp press release expressing its dissatisfaction with the work of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals and its Prosecutor, Serge Brammertz, which we convey in its entirety:

*The Coordination of Homeland War Associations of the Croatian Defence Council in Bosnia and Herzegovina expresses its deep dissatisfaction, outrage, and public protest regarding the stance of the Prosecutor of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, Serge Brammertz, toward the victims of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We learned from the media that Prosecutor Brammertz met in Sarajevo yesterday with representatives of the Association of Victims and Witnesses of Genocide and the Association Movement of Mothers of Srebrenica and Žepa Enclaves. This was all part of the preparations for the semi-annual report to the UN, and the decision on a potential mandate extension. No reasonable person disputes the right of any victim to a meeting, truth, justice, and respect. Yet, precisely for that reason, we raise the question: where are the Croatian victims in all of this?*

*Not a single Croatian victims' association, not a single association of families of fallen and murdered Croats, not a single Croatian mother who has been waiting for justice for decades received an invitation to meet with Prosecutor Brammertz. The Croat people in Bosnia and Herzegovina have their own Srebrenicas, their own Grabovicas, their own Buhine Kuće, their own Križančeva Sela, their own Travniks, Kakanjs, Doljans, Uzdols, and many other places of pain.*

*There are mothers who have died waiting for the truth. The recently deceased Sarafina Lauš, a mother and wife from the Travnik region whose three sons and husband were killed by members of the Army of BiH, never lived to see justice, despite having testified in The Hague multiple times. An identical fate is shared by Anica Jurić from the Kakanj region, whose three sons and husband were executed by members of the Army of BiH on their doorstep, right before her eyes.*

*Therefore, we ask Prosecutor Brammertz: are Croatian victims part of your mandate? That is why we do not approve of your actions or your demands. In many ways, today's example follows the "mission of the ICTY," which did not serve all victims. Or all crimes. That is why we believe that the mandate of such a biased International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals should not be extended. Because that actually means the extension of selective justice, or rather, the promotion of injustice. (HMS.ba)*

Unfortunately, this is not an isolated case. Namely, during previous visits as well, Chief Prosecutor Brammertz regularly met only with representatives of Bosniak victims, and not infrequently with representatives of obscure Bosniak associations. This was the case during a recent visit to Mostar where he met with a nationalist Bosniak association that bears the lofty name "Centre for Peace and Multiethnic Cooperation Mostar," which regularly spreads hate speech toward the Croat people, thereby disrupting both peace and multiethnic cooperation.

I have nothing against the Chief Prosecutor meeting with the victims of other nations; on the contrary, it is the duty of the Chief Prosecutor of the Hague Tribunal to communicate with the associations of victims of the 1991–1995 civil war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, particularly with the associations of victims of the gravest crime, the crime of genocide, in Srebrenica. As the wartime Minister of Health of the Republic and Federation of BiH (1994–1996), I myself, the signatory of this letter, wrote desperate letters to global centres of power regarding human rights violations in the regions of the besieged and occupied enclaves: Banja Luka, Sarajevo, Žepa and Srebrenica. I addressed one of those letters in the late spring of 1995 to Tadeusz Mazowiecki, the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights for the former Yugoslavia, in which I mentioned the word genocide even before it was officially ruled as such in court.<sup>1</sup>

It was the same when it came to the siege of the predominantly Bosniak enclave of Bihać. Bihać was under siege from the summer of 1992 until August 1995, when it was unblocked, thanks mostly to the Croatian Army's military operation "Storm." However, the most critical days for the survival of Bihać were at the end of November 1994, when Serb forces were about half a kilometre away from the Bihać hospital. At the time, as the Minister of Health, despite the great danger, I headed to Bihać and subsequently visited Italy, attempting to convey an alarming message to the global public.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "The terror and crime of genocide committed by Serb extremists is euphemistically called 'ethnic cleansing' by the 'international community,' presumably to ease its own conscience for its inaction. However, this time, unlike the events of 50 years ago, no one will be able to say, 'we didn't know.' This letter, too, has the task of stripping everyone in the world of this alibi. By its inaction or insufficient action, the international community has become an accomplice to this crime. ...Your Excellency, I ask you, as a proven humanist, to raise your voice once again in condemnation of the crimes being committed against the innocent civilians of Banja Luka, Sarajevo, Bihać, and other parts of BiH, and may your voice serve as an incentive to the powerful members of the UN Security Council to be guided more by the principles of morality and justice rather than by their own partial interests in resolving the crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina." Božo Ljubić, M.D., Ph.D., Minister of Health of the R/F BiH

<sup>2</sup> The newspaper *Mondo Europa* from December 3, 1994, writes, among other things: "The situation in Bihać, meanwhile, remains very serious. Božo Ljubić, professor of orthopaedics and Minister of Health of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, currently visiting Italy, stated that the healthcare situation is catastrophic (referring to the situation in Bihać, author's note). In the Bihać hospital, two thousand patients are being treated on seven hundred beds. There are 70 thousand residents in the city and just as many refugees. Excluding those wounded by the war, the diseases causing the most concern are epidemics of hepatitis and tuberculosis. There are many traumatised people—Ljubić reported—there are even cases of pregnant women who suffered stress giving premature birth, and there is no equipment to treat newborns, which can lead to serious cerebral disorders. Like Sarajevo, the city is now a large concentration camp—the doctor said—like a large prison where you can lose your life any day."

Equally so, I used every opportunity and contact with international military and civil representatives to point out the alarming situation in the Bosniak enclaves of Žepa and Srebrenica, and to facilitate the delivery of medicines, medical supplies, and medical personnel. To this end, I addressed letters to the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General Akashi, the Director-General of the World Health Organisation (WHO) Nakajima, the WHO Regional Director for Europe Dr. Asvall, the International Red Cross in Geneva, and the UNPROFOR Commander in BiH, General Rose.

Today, as a member of the Executive Board of the Croatian World Congress and as a (retired) physician and humanist, but primarily as a citizen of Bosnia and Herzegovina who cares about harmonious relations and reconciliation among the peoples of BiH, I am pained by the selective and unjust treatment of the victims of my own Croat people. Just as I was pained and concerned by the victims of the Bosniak and Serb peoples during the war (which I attempted to illustrate through my actions as Minister of Health during the most difficult moments of the war). Namely, many crimes against Croats in BiH have not been prosecuted at all, and where they have been prosecuted before the Court of BiH, only the alleged direct perpetrators were convicted, and moreover under the more lenient law of the former state. A particularly egregious case is the crime in the village of Grabovica, where on September 7, 8, and 9, 1993, all residents of the village were killed: from the little girl Mladenka Zadro, who was not yet four years old at the time, to elderly men and women. No one has ever been held accountable under command responsibility, even though the chain of command was clear and despite the fact that it was a prolonged crime spanning three days.

Selective justice is not justice but injustice, that undermines confidence in judicial institutions and hampers efforts toward reconciliation and peaceful coexistence of the peoples in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

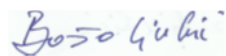
Therefore, we, the Croatian World Congress, an association registered with the UN, respectfully call upon the United Nations Security Council, under whose authority the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia was established, as well as the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals to ensure that all victims of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina receive equal consideration and just treatment without distinction.

Yours sincerely,

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Head

Committee for Education, Culture, and Socio-Political Affairs  
of the Croatian World Congress



Cc./

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