

## **Statements by the Members of the Canadian Parliament: Toronto, The 15th Anniversary of the Srebrenica Genocide**

July 11th 2010 marked the 15th anniversary of the Srebrenica Genocide. On that day some 8,372 men and boys were murdered by Bosnian Serb forces in Bosnia Herzegovina's north eastern town of Srebrenica. In commemoration of this tragedy Toronto's Bosnian community hosted a series of well organized and well received events: a photo exhibit at the Gladstone Hotel, a silent march in downtown Toronto, and a commemoration ceremony in Etobicoke. Events were organized in partnership with the Congress of North American Bosniaks and the Institute for the Research of Genocide-Canada.

With these events we paid our respects to those who lost their lives, and we raised awareness of the dangers of not acting against genocidal tendencies wherever and wherever they appear. Some sixty five years ago the world pledged "Never Again," following horrific evils of the Holocaust. Today we remind ourselves, and especially our government, that only when we take practical steps to identify, denounce, and prevent the genocidal tendencies, the world over, the pledge "Never Again" will really mean never again.

### **Brian Masse, MP Windsor West**

"This is an embarrassment and shameful. As the only western country to have not passed a motion or resolution recognizing the Srebrenica genocide, the Prime Minister has diminished Canada's position in the world on the eve of the G-8 and G-20 Summits," Masse stated. "What is humiliating and outrageous is the Prime Minister has vetoed what his own Foreign Affairs Minister agreed to. Even the Serbian parliament has passed a resolution. This is appalling." "Canada participated in peacekeeping in Bosnia as well as the international legal proceedings to bring justice to the victims. The Prime Minister's veto is an abandonment our proud past for this present embarrassment and shame."

### **Rob Oliphant, MP Don Valley West**

"In July 1995, an estimated 8,000 Bosniak men and boys were massacred in the Srebrenica region of Bosnia and Herzegovina, a UN declared safe area by Bosnian Serb forces. This was the largest mass murder in Europe since World War II. Both the appeals chamber of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and the International Court of Justice ruled that the Srebrenica massacre was genocide. In addition, resolutions condemning the massacre have been passed by the European Parliament and the American House of Representatives and Senate. This past March, the president of Serbia issued a full state apology and endorsed the ruling of the International Court of Justice. Recognizing the devastating effects of the July 1995 Srebrenica genocide, this bill would provide the opportunity for all Canadians to stand with those in the Bosnian Canadian community to share in their pain and honour the memory of those men and boys massacred. As we approach the 15th anniversary of this massacre, I hope this bill will serve as a step in the right direction which will ultimately

provide some semblance of comfort to the survivors of this genocide and to the Bosnian community here in Canada. May the memory of those lost never be forgotten.

**Borys Wrzesnewskyj, MP Etobicoke , Centre**

"As I underscored during my remarks at the Srebrenica Remembrance Day ceremony held at the Bosnian Islamic Centre in my riding, when the world community witnessed emaciated Bosniak men behind barbed wire at places like Manjača concentration camp in 1992, they did not muster the moral courage to act. Three years later, this failure to act against the evil of ethnic cleansing only emboldened the perpetrators to continue on their path of hatred resulting in massacre of over 8,000 Bosniak men and boys after the fall of Srebrenica. In Europe, humanity witnessed a series of the most horrific genocides: the Armenian genocide; the Holodomor, the famine genocide of Ukrainians; and the greatest evil amongst all evils, the Holocaust. In horror, sixty-five years ago, Europe pledged, the world pledged, 'Never Again.' Fifteen years ago, it happened again, in Europe, in Srebrenica. As we mark this fifteenth anniversary, we do so in shame. When will our pledge of 'Never Again' mean 'Never Again.'"