

Canada's Foreign Minister, the Honourable Lawrence Cannon, issued the following statement today commemorating the 15th anniversary of the Srebrenica massacre:

"Fifteen years ago, in Srebrenica in Bosnia and Herzegovina, more than 7,000 Bosniak men and boys were executed and over 25,000 Bosniaks were forced from their homes by Bosnian Serb forces. This tragic event was the worst crime of its kind to be committed in Europe since the Second World War. Both the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia determined it to be genocide.

"On this solemn occasion, I wish to extend my condolences on behalf of the Government of Canada to the survivors of this atrocity, as well as to all of those whose loved ones lost their lives or remain missing.

"Canada condemns all forms of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide, and is a vigorous defender of freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Canada fully supports the work of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and the judicial bodies in the region in prosecuting all those who committed such crimes. We continue to work in cooperation with other states and international institutions to ensure that perpetrators are held accountable for their crimes. We hope to see offenders brought to justice, in particular fugitive Ratko Mladic, the former Bosnian Serb leader who oversaw the Srebrenica massacre.

"Today, 15 years later, there are encouraging signs of reconciliation within the former Yugoslavia and within Bosnia and Herzegovina. Canada encourages all leaders in Bosnia and Herzegovina to work toward further reconciliation, promoting the interests of all Bosnian citizens and ensuring the country remains on its path to integrate into Euro-Atlantic institutions."