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In Bosnia, World Leaders Apologize for Massacre

By [DAVID ROHDE](#)

SREBRENICA, Bosnia and Herzegovina, July 11 - American and European leaders attending a ceremony on Monday marking the 10th anniversary of the execution of more than 7,000 Muslim men and boys here during the war in Bosnia promised that two Bosnian Serb leaders indicted for the killings would be brought to justice. But among the 30,000 Bosnian Muslims who gathered here today, relatives of the dead and others dismissed the promises as empty.

"I don't believe anymore that anyone loves us," said Zada Pasalic, the 63-year-old sister of a man who was among 610 execution victims buried here on Monday after being identified by DNA testing. "They promised so much and gave so little."

During the war in Bosnia, from 1992 to 1995, the United Nations declared Srebrenica the world's first civilian "safe area," stripped its soldiers of their artillery and armored vehicles and promised to protect the enclave. But in July 1995, Bosnian Serb forces overwhelmed 370 lightly armed Dutch peacekeepers here, seized control of the enclave and killed virtually every man and boy they captured.

At a somber ceremony under a gray sky that sprinkled rain on diplomats, mourners and graves, British and United Nations officials apologized for the failure of foreign powers to protect the town. The British foreign secretary, Jack Straw, made the most direct statement, saying it was "a shame on the international community that this evil took place under our noses."

"I particularly regret this," said Mr. Straw. "And I am deeply sorry for it."

Mark Malloch Brown, chief of staff to the secretary general of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, echoing an earlier United Nations report, said that United Nations officials made "serious errors of judgment" in Srebrenica that stemmed from a philosophy of "neutrality and nonviolence that was unsuited for the conflict in Bosnia," a brutal war that killed 200,000 people.

He said that member countries failed to provide the United Nations with the military forces it needed in Bosnia and that United Nations officials should have been more willing to use the forces they had.

The American representative at the ceremony, Pierre-Richard Prosper, the United States ambassador at large for war crimes, said he was attending the ceremony with "deep reflection." But he offered no apologies for the fall of the town. Reading a message from President Bush he said, "we remain committed" to the arrests of Radovan Karadzic, the wartime Bosnian Serb leader, and Ratko Mladic, the military commander, both of whom have been indicted for genocide in the killings.

At a later news conference, Mr. Prosper said the United States viewed the fall of the town with "deep regret." But the fall of Srebrenica was the "responsibility of the international community as a whole," he said, and not of the United States alone.

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