

26 February 2007

Court: Serbia Failed to Prevent Genocide

THE HAGUE, Netherlands — The United Nations' highest court ruled Monday that Serbia failed to use its influence with Bosnian Serbs to prevent the genocide of Bosnian Muslims at Srebrenica, but exonerated Serbia of direct responsibility for genocide or complicity in genocide during the 1992-95 war.

In a lengthy ruling, the International Court of Justice said the leaders of Serbia also failed to comply with its international obligation to punish those who carried out the massacre in July 1995.

The Serbians "should have made the best effort within their power to try and prevent the tragic events then taking shape," in the U.N. enclave, the scale of which "might have been surmised."

Reading the decision, Judge Rosalyn Higgins said it was clear in Belgrade there was a serious risk of a massive slaughter in Srebrenica, when some 7,000 Bosnian Muslims were killed.

But Serbia "has not shown that it took any initiative to prevent what happened or any action on its part to avert the atrocities which were being committed."

Serbia's claim that it was powerless to prevent the massacres "hardly tallies with their known influence" over the Bosnian Serb army, said the ruling by the court, also known as the World Court.

Copyright 2007

The Associated Press