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## **Statement by Adama Dieng, Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, on the conviction of Ratko Mladić for genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity**

(New York, - 22 November 2017) The Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Adama Dieng, expressed satisfaction at today's verdict by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) against Ratko Mladić, who was commander of the Main Staff of the Army of Republika Srpska (VRS) during the 1992-1995 armed conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). Mr. Mladić has been found guilty of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes and sentenced to life imprisonment. "Today is an historic day. The verdict by the ICTY against Ratko Mladić sends a clear message that there is no space for impunity and that justice will prevail."

Special Adviser Dieng paid homage to the victims of the crimes committed by Mr. Mladić, honored their courage and perseverance in the pursuit of justice and expressed solidarity with them. "This verdict renders justice to those who suffered as a result of the atrocity crimes committed by Mr. Mladić. Nothing can erase the horrors of the past, but they can now have the comfort of knowing that Mr. Mladić will face punishment appropriate to the crimes he committed. This verdict provides victims with some measure of redress so that they can move forward with their lives."

At the same time, the Special Adviser stressed that criminal accountability "is not only about the past but is also about the future. Accountability constitutes a critical component of prevention and also an important step on the path to reconciliation. In a region where we are seeing denial of some of the most heinous crimes committed during the armed conflict and the glorification of war criminals, justice alone will not lead to reconciliation, but there can be no real reconciliation without justice. I hope that this verdict, as well as past decisions by the ICTY, will encourage the region to think about what happened, learn the lessons of the past and chart a future that fully acknowledges those lessons."

Special Adviser Dieng underlined that today's verdict sends a message that reaches beyond the region. "This verdict constitutes a warning to all those who commit or condone the commission of atrocity crimes, as well as their incitement, or glorify the perpetrators. No matter how long it takes, justice must prevail. Victims of Mr. Mladić's crimes never gave up hope that he would be brought to justice. Their perseverance is an example to us. Let us spare no effort to ensure that every single victim can have access to impartial and independent justice."

The Special Adviser praised the ICTY for carrying out its responsibilities independently and impartially. As the ICTY concludes its work after issuing more than 160 indictments, the Special Adviser called on the national courts of States in the former Yugoslavia to honor this legacy by continuing to prosecute atrocity crimes. He also called on governments in the region and beyond to fully support these efforts, including by abiding by their obligations under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and by enacting the legislation that will

allow these crimes to be prosecuted nationally in a manner fully compliant with fair trial standards.

“Today,” the Special Advisers said, “we stand with the victims, we honor their sacrifice and we salute their courage. Tomorrow, we continue working so that there is no space for impunity and so that justice can lead to true and long-lasting reconciliation.”

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