



THE PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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S T A T E M E N T

BY

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IN

THE PLENARY DEBATE OF THE
48TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

ON

THE SITUATION IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

20 DECEMBER 1993

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Mr. President, the Guyana delegation wishes to express its profound sorrow at the tragic situation existing in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We are gravely concerned at the agony and extreme suffering of the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is regrettable that after almost five decades since the end of World War II there should be a situation in Europe which again causes pain and distress throughout the world. There have been serious violations of human rights which have horrified the international community.

The Charter under which the United Nations operates makes clear that one of the main purposes of the Organisation's existence is the maintenance of international peace and security. In this context, it calls for the taking of effective collective measures for the prevention of war and the removal of all threats to peace, as well as for suppressing all acts of aggression and other breaches of the peace. The *raison d'être* of the United Nations is to use its offices to bring about by peaceful measures and in conformity with the principles of the Charter and international law the settlement of disputes which lead to conflict.

The question one may ask is: has the United Nations fulfilled its duties and commitments as regards the situation in Bosnia & Herzegovina? We know that the Security Council has been seized of this issue and has in fact passed several resolutions thereon. However, despite this, the suffering, loss of human life and physical destruction continue unabated. Firm action needs to be taken, at the level of the Security Council, to fulfill the commitment of the United Nations to restoring normalcy to the people of this country.

Mr. President, the right to live is the most basic right of all human beings. The world community has watched with horror what has been taking place in Bosnia and Herzegovina and, would wish to see peace prevail in that troubled land.

Humanitarian assistance to ease the terrible burden borne by the victims of the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina, particularly women and children, is imperative. As winter takes its hold in the region, the suffering of the population will be greatly heightened. While we commend the role played by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, in providing relief, we must recognize that much more needs to be done to alleviate a worsening humanitarian situation.

Mr. President, the practice of "ethnic cleansing" and the wanton destruction of the cultural heritage of the peoples of the area which have featured so prominently in many reports must not be condoned. As a country with its own interesting and diverse mix of ethnic groups, social and cultural traditions, Guyana knows only too well some of the difficulties that can accompany this phenomenon. We are especially conscious of the need to preserve the rich heritage that is the result of the blending of different cultures and the co-existence of many ethnic groups. We therefore urge all the parties to this conflict to seek to preserve that precious heritage. The international community bears an important responsibility in ensuring the discontinuation of unacceptable practices and the preservation of the societies in question. Each member state of this body must exercise its responsibility towards that end.

The statement by the Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina expressed his country's commitment to reaching a negotiated peace, despite numerous failures to find a principled solution. We firmly support that position.

The draft resolution before us deserves our careful consideration, since its implications are many and important. In our quest for peace, we must be careful about establishing precedents which in themselves may create problems. Above all, we must urge and maintain our main objective to bring peace and an end to the sufferings of the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

I thank you Mr. President.

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