

Foreign Press Office - Mostar

MEDIA REPORTS

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Mesic: Srebrenica crimes cannot be equated with Croatia's Operation Storm

HINA

July 30, 2005

VRSAR - Croatian President Stjepan Mesic said on Saturday [30 July] the crime in Bosnia's Srebrenica, the biggest in the history of this region because 8,000 people were killed only because they were not Serbs, could not be equated with individual crimes in Croatia's liberation Operation Storm.

Speaking to the press in the northern Adriatic town of Vrsar, Mesic was commenting on Serbian President Boris Tadic's call on other countries' leaders to condemn on the tenth anniversary of Storm on 5 August the crimes committed against Serbs in Croatia in 1995, just as he condemned the Srebrenica crime.

"There's no justification for the crimes committed at Srebrenica, Skabrnja and Ovcaro because they were planned and brutal crimes committed in order to cleanse areas and achieve the genocidal plan under which all Serbs would be able to live in one state," said Mesic.

He stated that Croatia condemned every crime because no one had the right to do anything that was unacceptable in the name of the Croatian people. He added this was why everyone who carried out, planned or commanded a crime, or knew that crimes were committed but did nothing about it, would be prosecuted in Croatia. "We are prosecuting such people now regardless of who they are."

Mesic said it was important to remember that no Croat committed a war crime in Serbia, whereas "rivers of Serbian volunteers, accompanied by tanks, arrived in Croatia trying to expand Serbia's territory".

"United Europe will accept us when we realize that borders can't be changed and that we can't go to war in order to change borders."

Asked if Tadic's statement would undermine Croatia-Serbia relations, Mesic answered in the negative, saying the statement was given because of the situation in Serbia, where he added some still thought the Serbian border should stretch to Virovitica, Karlovac and Karlobag in Croatia. He said that unfortunately, "some still win elections in Serbia on such messages".

The press asked if the possible involvement of the parliament Speaker in war crimes in the eastern city of Osijek in 1991 might affect Croatia's position and reputation ahead of the launching of European Union entry negotiations, Mesic said guilt should be individualised. He urged the judiciary to appropriately punish everyone proven guilty.

"If someone is guilty, they should answer for it. If they are not, let's not harass them," Mesic concluded.

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BiH Croats and Roma only ones in Europe without TV program

Slobodna Dalmacija
By Zoran Zekic

July 30, 2005

Chairman of the BiH Presidency Ivo Miro Jovic met in Sarajevo with BiH media and association representatives who use the Croatian language. During the meeting, Jovic in more detail learned about the problems facing journalists writing in Croatian and the status of their media houses.

On this occasion, the chairman emphasized that, if Croats are equal in the mass media, then they will also be equal in everything else, because representation in the mass media within a multinational environment is of utmost importance.

During the meeting participants also discussed what to call a nation without its own media and Jovic pointed out that BiH Croats, along with Roma, are the only nation in Europe without a public television in their own language. The question arose whether Croats in the future will be able to be a factor and enjoy equality in such a situation.

Regarding the Constitutional Court's decision on the PBS law, the meeting participants asked the BiH Presidency chairman to utilize all his powers in order to "restore dignity to Croats" and pointed out they will additionally mobilize media in the Croatian language in order to compensate the right to their language and preserve their culture and tradition.

On the current public program being offered to Croats by public television, Croats have already voiced themselves by not paying the license fee. According to TV companies, that number is around 81,000 families, which is, mildly stated, a referendum answer.

Representatives of associations and the media also informed Jovic they would organize a round table on the use of language and the functioning of mass media in a multinational community in accordance with European experience. They invited the Presidency chairman to sponsor the event, which he accepted. (Excerpt)