

I am very pleased that we are having this briefing today and that our distinguished speaker, Judge Theodor Meron, will give us an authoritative assessment of the International Tribunal and its work and future as can be given. Having traveled to the southeastern Europe, including very recently to Belgrade, Judge Meron can also provide us with his assessment on the impact the Tribunal's work has had there. Perhaps that is the most critical issue, because justice cannot be just a word or principle in southeastern Europe, where so many horrible crimes occurred. Justice must actually be felt by the people.

The two issues which, I am sure, will be addressed today, and with which I am most concerned are the following:

First, what are the prospects for apprehending those indictees who remain at large and are believed to be in Serbia and Montenegro, or Bosnia and Herzegovina? In particular, can we expect Ratko Mladic and Radovan Karadzic to be arrested and transferred soon? As far as I am concerned, nothing should have greater priority in the region now. Not only do these individuals need to be held accountable for their crimes of ethnic cleansing in the past, the criminal networks which maintain and protect them today need to be broken so that genuine reform can take place.

Second, the idea of transferring cases to courts in the region has gained increased momentum in recent years, but are the countries where these trials would be held developing their respective judicial systems to meet international standards and ensure respect for the rule of law? What steps still need to be taken, and what can be done to help?

Thanks you, Judge Meron, for your service at the International Tribunal in The Hague, and for your willingness to be here today to discuss your important work. I look forward to your comments and insights on the issues that I have raised or may be of concern to you.