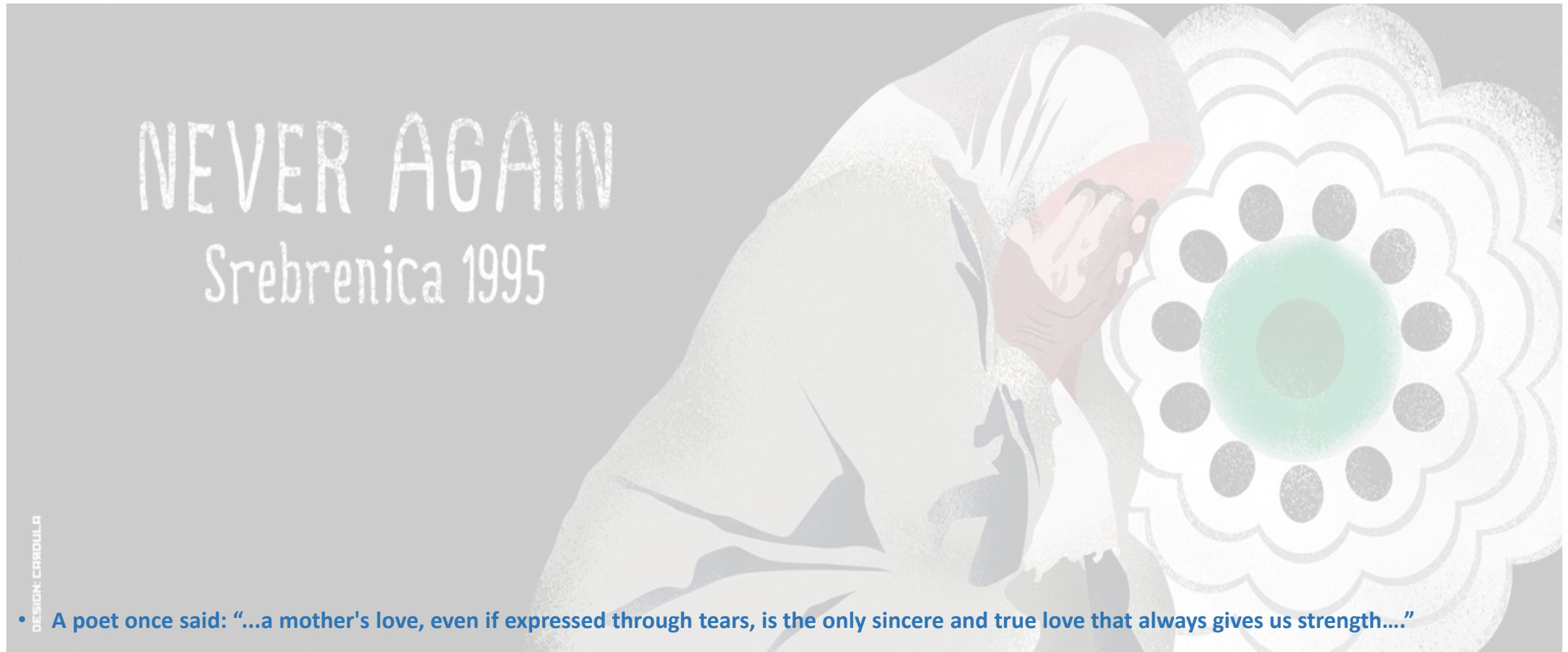


Mother and flower of Srebrenica



Introduction

- Madam Mayor Parrish, Members of Council and others present here, good morning. My name is Ahmed Salihovic, I am a resident of Mississauga, and I am a direct descendant of Srebrenica, Bosnia and Herzegovina. I am honoured to be here today to talk about the Srebrenica Genocide.
- Thank you for your kindness, allowing us to speak at City Hall, as well as for sparing your time from your busy schedule to join us today. We consider this event as kind of commemorating victims of the Srebrenica Genocide, which took place 30 years ago.
- This year the commemoration of the 30th anniversary of that tragic event started on July 5th in the city of Windsor, ON and continued across Canada

Purpose of the meeting

- As this year marks the 30th anniversary of the Srebrenica Genocide (July 11, 1995), the Bosnian Canadian Community, particularly survivors respectfully request that government of Mississauga city stands in solidarity with us by issuing a public Proclamation to mark this solemn event in the recent history of Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- The Bosnians in Mississauga expect that the government of Mississauga city through educational system proactively supports the process of learning and preserving the truth about the Srebrenica Genocide.
- The Bosnians in Mississauga would appreciate it, if Mississauga city would allow designated park area where a monument would allow the annual gathering of Bosnians and others to show deserved respect to all who perished in the Srebrenica Genocide. The project design for such monument will be submitted for approval by following current established procedures for it.

What happened in Srebrenica

- The Srebrenica Genocide happened on July 11th 1995 and it is the most severe genocide on European soil since the Holocaust
- The Srebrenica Genocide, is perpetrated by Bosnian Serb forces in July 1995 within the "United Nations protected area" of Srebrenica, Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- As a reminder, in 1993, the UN passed Resolution 819, declaring Srebrenica a "safe zone." Thousands of Bosnians fled there seeking protection, placing their trust in the UN and its 200 stationed Dutch peacekeepers

How it happened

- However, the resolution that authorized their deployment did **not** permit the use of force to defend civilians. In July 1995, Serbian occupying forces led by criminal general Ratko Mladić captured the city while UN troops stood by.
- What followed was a **cold, calculated**, and systematic genocide. Unarmed men and boys were separated from their families and brutally executed within days. Women and girls were placed in camps, where many were raped and tortured.

Number killed in Srebrenica

- To conceal the crimes, bodies were buried in mass graves, then later exhumed and reburied in secondary and tertiary graves in an attempt to destroy the evidence.
- There are currently 8,372 names on the preliminary list of murdered Srebrenica residents, and over 12,000 people are still listed as missing. New mass graves are still being discovered to this day.
- Every year on July 11, newly identified victims are laid to rest at the memorial cemetery in Potočari, near Srebrenica city.

International community activities^{7.2} during the end of 20th century

- Srebrenica remains one of the darkest and most shameful chapters of the 20th century - a symbol of the international community's failure, and a lasting reminder of the need to stand firmly against genocide, wherever it may occur.
- UN made "serious errors of judgment" in Srebrenica and that highlighted the UN's inadequacy in peacekeeping during wars.
- The international community needs to learn from Srebrenica to improve the UN's ability to prevent genocides in the future.
- Today the phrase "never again" is perceived as "not working" because of ongoing genocides and mass atrocities in the world.

Canadian role

- Further, Canada has taken commendable steps to recognize the Srebrenica Genocide and to lead efforts in preserving the memory of its victims, both domestically and internationally.
- Notably, in 2010, the Canadian Parliament established Srebrenica Genocide Remembrance Day, and in May 2024, Canada co-sponsored the Resolution A/RES/78/282 at the UN General Assembly.
- Canada has consistently demonstrated its friendship and alliance with Bosnia and Herzegovina and its people. This is reflected in the significant Bosnian diaspora residing across Canada, many of whom are survivors of the Srebrenica Genocide.

International community activities^{7.2} at the beginning of 21st century

- On 23 May 2024, the United Nations General Assembly adopted **Resolution A/RES/78/282**, officially designating **11 July** as the **International Day of Reflection and Commemoration of the 1995 Genocide in Srebrenica**, to be observed annually. The resolution also established the **UN Outreach Programme on the Srebrenica Genocide**, reinforcing global commitment to memory, education, and prevention.
- This resolution stands as proof that the world has not forgotten Srebrenica. It is a clear message to survivors, families, and future generations that the victims will be remembered, their suffering acknowledged, justice pursued, and the truth to be preserved.

Conclusion #1

- Observing July 11, affirms the importance of acknowledging the rulings of international tribunals as an essential step toward justice, reconciliation, and the prevention of future crimes such as **genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity**.
- The **Srebrenica flower** is a symbol of this remembrance. Its **eleven white petals** represent the innocence of the victims and the date of the genocide - **11 July 1995** - while the **green centre** symbolizes hope for a better future.

Conclusion #2

- By remembering and honouring the victims of Srebrenica, we become their voice. In doing so, we reject denial, uphold truth, and stand firmly against hatred and genocide. Our remembrance is not just an act of mourning - it is a commitment to justice and a call to protect future generations from similar atrocities
- We would be grateful if your government could consider **issuing the mentioned Proclamation and preliminary approves building a small monument in a designated park area.**
- Now, please pay attention to the **short video collage about the genocide in Srebrenica** that was prepared by Mirza Durak.

Conclusion #3

- Your presence here today means a lot to us. I thank you for your time and efforts to come to this gathering.
- On behalf of the Bosnian Community in Mississauga, we extend our heartfelt gratitude for your unwavering support and look forward to continued cooperation.
- Thank you very much indeed!
- If you have any comments or question, please let us know. We would be more than happy to answer.

Srebrenica flower

