



Under the auspices of the European Parliament's Sub Committee on Human Rights (DROI) and with the support of the Party of European Socialists (PSE)

Subject: Conference in Brussels: 'The unfinished business of the UN international criminal tribunals of the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda: the future role of the EU and its Member States'

Brussels, 12 March 2009

Dear Sir or Madam,

The International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), REDRESS and International Criminal Law Services (ICLS) are honored to invite you to participate in the high level conference ***'The unfinished business of the UN international criminal tribunals of the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda: the future role of the EU and its Member States'***. The conference is organised with the support of the European Parliament's Sub-Committee on Human Rights (DROI) and the Party of European Socialists (PSE) and will take place on **2 April 2009** in the European Parliament in **Brussels**.

The two United Nations (UN) International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and for Rwanda were established by the UN Security Council in 1993 and 1994 respectively to prosecute individuals responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. The establishment of both Tribunals was an important recognition of the gravity and scale of the atrocities that had been committed, including genocide in both conflicts and other systematic, widespread and flagrant violations of international humanitarian law.

The one day conference takes place against the background of the closure of the Tribunals under the terms of the completion strategy of the UN Security Council, which refers to 2010 as the target date for the completion of appeals and other remaining work. The target date for completion of all first instance trials, originally the end of 2008, has only recently been extended to the end of 2009. However, it is doubtful that the courts will meet either deadline. A working group of the UN Security Council is currently examining the completion process. It is also considering what is referred to as the 'residual' functions of the Tribunals. Residual functions refer to a range of judicial, prosecutorial and other functions that the Tribunals or successor bodies will have to perform for many years to come. One example of such functions is the eventual trial of high-level fugitives such as Ratko Mladic and Félicien Kabuga. Other examples are the continued protection and support of victims and witnesses and the continued enforcement of sentences of convicted persons after the 'closure' of the Tribunals.

The conference therefore takes place at a crucial moment for both Tribunals. After 16/15 years of their existence and with their imminent 'closure', it is now crucial to assess what has been accomplished and, in particular, what remains to be done to ensure that the remaining work of the Tribunals is completed properly and that their legacy is preserved for the future. The conference seeks to raise awareness of the key residual functions and issues and to explore the role of the EU and its Member States in supporting the post-closure process of both Tribunals.

We wish to bring together key stakeholders, including survivors, practitioners and policy makers from EU Member States, personnel of the two Tribunals, experts from civil society, Members of the European Parliament and civil servants from the European Institutions.

We would welcome your expertise and kindly invite you to attend.

For more information, please find a draft conference agenda attached. If you have any further questions do not hesitate to contact Mr Jürgen Schurr on 0032 26094425/ juergen@redress.org.

Sincerely yours,

Souhayr Belhassen
President,
FIDH

Carla Ferstman
Executive Director,
REDRESS

Gabriël Oosthuizen
Executive Director,
ICLS



REALISED WITH THE FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROGRAMME OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION