

Speech: “The legacy of the ICTY should be a clear and resounding message to those who commit these crimes; you cannot escape justice.”

Thank you Mr President.

I would like to thank the Presidents of the Tribunal and the Mechanism and the Prosecutor for their reports and their presentations. And, at the outset, let me reiterate the UK’s continued support for the ICTY and the Mechanism, and for all that they do to end impunity for the most serious international crimes.

Mr President,

As the ICTY progresses through its final year, the international community as a whole must continue to support the Tribunal so that it leaves behind a continuing and enduring legacy.

Completion of its judicial work remains the priority. We welcome that the Tribunal remains on track to deliver its final judgments in the cases of Mladic and Prlic et al before the end of the year. Let me commend the work of the judges and staff, as well as the Tribunal’s efficiency measures, such as the Prosecutor’s “one office” policy, which have made this possible. We are also pleased that the transfer of residual functions from the ICTY to the Mechanism remains on track.

We are, however, very much aware of the challenges that the ICTY faces. We share the Tribunal’s concern over continued staff attrition and we welcome measures taken to address this. We hope staff will feel able to see their work through to the finish.

Mr President,

The UK is very concerned that – over two years on – the arrest warrants for the three individuals in the Jojic et al contempt case have still not been executed. We strongly urge Serbia to cooperate fully with the ICTY in all respects, including complying with its international obligations in this matter. Failure to do so risks undermining central principles of international justice and the rule of law by allowing those suspected of interfering with witnesses to avoid accountability.

It is essential that the ICTY’s vast experience and lessons learned are not lost – its legacy must reflect its achievements and make a lasting contribution to regional peace and stability. We are therefore pleased to note its forward-looking approach to maximising digital outreach and transforming the ICTY’s website into a permanent repository for the

Tribunal's digital legacy.

The legacy of the ICTY should be a clear and resounding message to those who commit these crimes; you cannot escape justice. Whether it takes two years or twenty, history will eventually catch up with you.

Mr President,

With regard to the Mechanism, the Mechanism has entered an important phase, shortly commencing a retrial in Stanisic and Simatovic and undertaking complex appeals in Karadzic and Seselj. We look forward to the Mechanism's continuous, expeditious and efficient treatment of these cases, and to receiving updates as they progress.

We remain concerned that the situation of Judge Akay has not yet been resolved, and by consequent ongoing delays in the Ngirabatware case. We hope that a pragmatic resolution can be found as quickly as possible.

We fully support co-ordination between the Prosecutor's Office, national enforcement agencies and Interpol in regards to apprehending the eight remaining fugitives, and we welcome the Prosecutor's initiatives to improve tracking activities. We hope they can be brought to justice soon, and we urge all States to cooperate to this end.

We also welcome the relocation of two further acquitted and released persons from Arusha and support the Mechanism in its ongoing work in this respect, recognising the challenges.

Mr President,

In addition to the work of the Mechanism and the ICTY, there can be no doubt that effective national prosecutions are vital in achieving justice for the victims of atrocities and holding perpetrators to account for their crimes.

So we are troubled by the Prosecutor's report for the ICTY that regional judicial cooperation is moving in the wrong direction. It is imperative that all States work together to achieve justice. We strongly urge all relevant authorities to initiate discussions immediately to remove any barriers to investigating and prosecuting the most serious crimes of international concern. And we call on regional States to work with the Office of the Prosecutor in order to develop practical proposals to improve the situation as soon as possible. Individuals suspected of war crimes cannot continue to be shielded from justice simply by virtue of their location.

We are also deeply disturbed by the Prosecutor's reports, both for the ICTY and the Mechanism, of denial of crimes – in particular genocide – and revisionism. If such crimes are to be prevented in future, it is essential to accept the ICTY and Mechanism's findings and rulings on the tragic events of the not-so-distant past.

Thank you Mr President.