

PRESS RELEASE

Surviving relatives of Srebrenica victims file criminal complaint re crimes committed in July 1995

Amsterdam, 6 July 2010 – Today, surviving relatives of the victims of Srebrenica filed a criminal complaint on charges of genocide and war crimes committed by Dutchbat soldiers in July 1995. The Dutch soldiers transferred the complainants' relatives to the Bosnian-Serb enemy, who then killed them. The criminal complaint is directed *inter alia* against the commander and deputy commander of Dutchbat III. The complaint was filed by Hasan Nuhanovic and the family of Rizo Mustafic.

Hasan Nuhanovic worked for Dutchbat as an interpreter. When the town of Srebrenica was taken by the Bosnian Serbs on 11 July 1995, Nuhanovic sought refuge in the Dutchbat compound together with his parents and brother. On 13 July 1995, Dutchbat soldiers ordered his parents and brother off the compound. Rizo Mustafic, the Dutchbat electrician, was also made to leave the compound. Rizo Mustafic has been missing ever since. The remains of the father and brother of Hasan Nuhanovic were found in a mass grave in, respectively, 2007 and 2010. His brother will be buried in Srebrenica next Sunday, 11 July 2010.

The actions of the Dutchbat soldiers are criminal and can be qualified as genocide and/or war crimes and/or murder. To date, the (Dutch) Public Prosecutor's Office has taken no initiative in terms of criminal investigations, let alone prosecution. According to international and European treaties, the Public Prosecutor's Office is obligated to initiate criminal investigations. In their criminal complaint, the surviving relatives request that the Public Prosecutor's Office initiate criminal investigations into the actions by the Dutch soldiers in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1995.

Background – After the fall of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1991, a civil war broke out on Bosnia-Herzegovina. On 21 March 1992, the United Nations Security Council established the 'United Nations Protection Force' (UNPROFOR). One of the tasks of UNPROFOR was to safeguard so-called 'safe havens'. These safe havens served to protect Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Security Council charged UNPROFOR with the protection of the refugees in the Srebrenica enclave by its presence and, if necessary, by force. The enclave was under the protection of the third Dutch battalion (Dutchbat III) from January until the end of July 1995. The headquarters of the Dutch soldiers in the Srebrenica-enclave was the base in Potocari (the compound). On 11 July 1995, the Srebrenica-enclave fell into the hands of the Bosnian Serbs, who subsequently massacred 8,000 Muslims, most of whom were men.

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