

Syria shows we still don't mean 'never again'
By Ahmed Davutoglu and Zlatko Lagumdžija
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Eighteen years ago this summer, in a town called Srebrenica, in eastern Bosnia and Herzegovina, the world witnessed the [murder of approximately 8,000 Bosnian men and boys](#) and the forced deportation of nearly 30,000 women from their land. Thus Srebrenica became a byword for not only the [brutality of the three-year conflict](#) in the former Yugoslavia but also of humanity at its [most evil and depraved](#).

Unlike many organisms, humans are capable of learning from their mistakes. [Srebrenica was one tragic mistake](#) with a big lesson.

Yet 18 years after the atrocities of Srebrenica and the trauma of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the worst humanitarian calamity of the 21st century is [unfolding in Syria](#). In another place and another time, we are again seeing a mass tragedy. That which the world had pledged would “never again” occur is playing out once more.

After three years of war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the death toll was more than 300,000 and the number of refugees reached 1.3 million. In Syria, more than 100,000 people have been killed since a peaceful uprising began in 2011. More than 7 million [Syrians need humanitarian assistance](#); [4 million are internally displaced](#) and [1.4 million are seeking refuge in neighboring countries](#).

In 1992, innocent people were killed on [Vase Miskina Street](#) in Sarajevo while waiting in line to get bread. In 2013, the innocent residents of [Aleppo and Homs](#) are the targets of savagery while they try to take bread to their homes.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, civilians were attacked with [heavy weapons and artillery](#). In Syria, civilians have dodged [ballistic missiles fired on civilian areas](#). And it has been confirmed that the [Syrian regime has used chemical weapons](#) against its own people.

Ethnic cleansing was the sickening [theme of the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina](#). In Syria, the regime ruthlessly, and apparently without shame, has [massacred hundreds](#) of civilians before the world.

Why is the [global community](#) — so [many people of peace](#) and [compassion](#) — allowing this to happen again? The international doctrine of “[responsibility to protect](#)” was crafted in response to the tragedy of Bosnia and Herzegovina. If the responsibility to protect [does not apply to Syria](#), where does it apply?

How long will the U.N. Security Council continue to look the other way while such carnage goes on in full view? How long will the international community hold back while an estimated 5,000 Syrians lose their lives every month at the hands of the regime in Damascus? Is the world waiting for yet [another apology by a U.N. secretary general for inaction](#) in the face of a man-made humanitarian catastrophe — as [happened in Bosnia and Herzegovina](#)?

We are confident that the people of Syria will eventually free themselves from the shackles of this bloody regime. The will of the people always wins out. After decades of repression, they wish to live in a country

where their will prevails, rather than that of autocrats; where the sovereignty belongs in its entirety to the people, who seek to enjoy universal values such as democracy, human rights, the rule of law and good governance that they have been denied.

The valiant men and women of Syria will long be remembered for their gallantry and the noble struggle they are staging for this vision.

In the 21st century, there can be no place for ruthless oppression with a medieval mentality, certainly not when the lessons of history are there to guide us.

Two decades after the horrors of Bosnia and Herzegovina, should the price for owning your freedom still be so high?

When the next generations look back on [Syria's revolution](#), they will judge the actions of each individual. It is time for all Syrians and the international community to take their places on the right side of history.

After all, history will keep repeating itself if no one learns from its lessons.

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