



REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING

AGENDA ITEM: BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

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S T A T E M E N T

by

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PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE

OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

New York, 6 May 2020

Mr. President,

I thank the members of the Security Council, the High Representative and the other speakers for their Statements.

This meeting of the Security Council on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina takes place at a very challenging time as the international community is making enormous efforts to fight back the COVID-19 pandemic. This difficult time provides an opportunity for us to demonstrate that by acting together, in solidarity and cooperation, we can overcome the difficulties the world is facing today. Before I proceed, though, let me express my regrets and deep condolences to the families that lost their loved ones to this dangerous virus. Our common fight against the pandemic has confirmed the importance of global and regional cooperation and of addressing the challenges that threaten development and stability not only of our region, but also of the entire world. At these difficult times we have witnessed remarkable friendship and solidarity between Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina and their citizens. In that context, let me mention the 'green corridor' at the border crossing at Sremska Rača opened in line with a CEFTA decision to set up a system of a faster flow of goods among the countries of the region, including, in particular, humanitarian products. Serbia made every effort to send necessary assistance to Bosnia and Herzegovina, such as medicine and protection equipment. Let me point out once again that my country intends to continue to provide necessary assistance and render solidarity to Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as to other countries in the region.

Serbia continues to be firmly committed to promoting good-neighborly relations with the ultimate goal of overcoming the negative legacy of the past and of building a common future based on the principles of mutual respect. By its constructive and active engagement within the regional framework and through regional initiatives and mechanisms, it strives to make a positive contribution towards achieving common interests. In this way, my country has manifested that sharing common values is conducive to the achievement of shared goals, the ones that bring us closer to EU membership. Serbia, therefore, strongly supports each and every step made by Bosnia and Herzegovina in that direction.

Serbia invested much effort in stabilizing the situation in the region and will continue to do so also in the future. In that regard, respect for the principles of territorial integrity and sovereignty on which the international order is based, is of paramount importance. Serbia's position regarding

the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina is well known, reiterated many times and is absolutely indisputable. Serbia supports Bosnia and Herzegovina as one State with two entities: Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, just as it supports all the decisions that that State makes in accordance with the competences and agreements of its three constituent peoples - the Serbs, Croats and the Bosniacs. Serbia will continue to develop good and active cooperation both with the central and entity authorities. We welcome the formation of the Institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina at the end of 2019 and the beginning of the work of the new Council of Ministers headed by Mr. Zoran Tegeltija.

A guarantor of the Dayton Peace Agreement, Serbia wishes to point out, 25 years since its signing, that it is important to reaffirm the validity of the Agreement which put an end to a civil war and provided the basis for stability both in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in the entire region. In that sense, I would like to recall that the mechanism for a possible change of the Dayton Agreement is known and implies consent by the two entities and the three constituent peoples. Insistence on, or imposition of, a solution either from within or outside of Bosnia and Herzegovina are unacceptable. We are convinced that a functioning Bosnia and Herzegovina is possible just as well without changing the fundamental principles of the constitution of the country and by focusing on a reform package needed to proceed with European integrations, backed by the consensus that exists in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Serbia supports unequivocally active dialogue on solving all outstanding issues within Bosnia and Herzegovina and believes that all key decisions relevant for its future are to be taken following a dialogue and agreements between the entities and among the three constituent peoples. We call on all actors to show the necessary level of responsibility and to refrain from inflammatory rhetoric and mutual accusations, as well from unilateral acts that are contrary to the letter and spirit of the Dayton Agreement. The Agreement came as a compromise and reflects a delicate balance, achieved hard way, between opposing concepts of the constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina; subsequent attempts to favour any of the models proffered 25 years ago do not conduce at all to full and lasting stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We also call on all actors involved in political processes in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as on the representatives of the international community, to show more responsibility and forgo the rhetoric aimed at disqualifying other political actors, especially those elected legitimately in democratic elections. We believe that dialogue within the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina is the only way forward to raise the level of trust and confidence and achieve a compromise solution for the future development of Bosnia

and Herzegovina. As in the past, Serbia will continue to strive to make a maximum and constructive contribution in that regard.

Strengthening regional cooperation by engaging in numerous activities and by taking a responsible positions in order to fulfill justified expectations of all citizens continues to be the lasting commitment of my country. Bosnia and Herzegovina is one of Serbia's key regional partners. We welcome economic progress being achieved in the region; it brings about social development and wellbeing to all our citizens. As we did in the past, we shall continue to work with utmost dedication on promoting regional cooperation.

Let me point out once again that Serbia is firmly committed to peace, stability and reconciliation. As I said at the beginning of my Statement, solidarity being demonstrated at the time of the crisis that is our reality today should continue to be held onto even after the crisis once becomes a thing of the past. And the policy of dialogue, good-neighbourliness and cooperation is second to none. Sadly, 25 long years after the conflict, the devastation of the war cannot be restored and those who perished in it cannot be brought back to life. What we can and should do, though, to restore confidence in our future is to condemn all crimes and bring their perpetrators to justice, while paying respect to and empathizing with each and every victim irrespective of its ethnicity and religion. Only in that way shall we step on the road of economic and political stability, lasting reconciliation and common prosperity.