

A Letter of Resignation

[Tadeusz Mazowiecki](#)
[September 21, 1995 Issue](#)

27 July 1995
His Excellency
Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali
Secretary-General
The United Nations
New York

Dear Mr. Secretary-General,

Events in recent weeks in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and above all the fact that the United Nations has allowed Srebrenica and Zepa to fall, along with the horrendous tragedy which has beset the population of those “safe havens” guaranteed by international agreements, oblige me to state that I do not see any possibility of continuing the mandate of Special Rapporteur entrusted to me by the Commission on Human Rights.

On accepting the mandate which was given to me for the first time in August 1992, I declared unequivocally that my goal would not simply be writing reports but helping the people themselves. The creation of “safe havens” was from the very beginning a central recommendation in my reports. The recent decisions of the London conference which accepted the fall of Srebrenica and resigned itself to the fate of Zepa are unacceptable to me. Those decisions did not create the conditions necessary for the defence of all “safe havens.”

These events constitute a turning point in the development of the situation in Bosnia. At one and the same time, we are dealing with the struggle of a State, a member of the United Nations, for its survival and multi-ethnic character, and with the endeavour to protect principles of international order. One cannot speak about the protection of human rights with credibility when one is confronted with the lack of consistency and courage displayed by the international community and its leaders. The reality of the human rights situation today is illustrated by the tragedy of the people of Srebrenica and Zepa.

Human rights violations continue blatantly. There are constant blockades of the delivery of humanitarian aid. The civilian population is shelled remorselessly and the “blue helmets” and representatives of humanitarian organizations are dying. Crimes have been committed with swiftness and brutality and by contrast the response of the international community has been slow and ineffectual.

The character of my mandate only allows me to further describe crimes and violations of human rights. But the present critical moment forces us to realize the true character of those crimes and the responsibility of Europe and the international community for their own helplessness in addressing them. We have been fighting in Poland against a totalitarian system with a vision for the Europe of tomorrow. How can we believe in a Europe of tomorrow created by children of people who are abandoned today?

I would like to believe that the present moment will be a turning point in the relationship between Europe and the world towards Bosnia. The very stability of international order and the principle of civilization is at stake over the question of Bosnia. I am not convinced that the turning point hoped for will happen and cannot continue to participate in the pretence of the protection of human rights.

Mr. Secretary-General, please understand the motives behind my decision. Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest ...

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