

Uwe Kitzinger CBE speech

April 6, 2012

My Lord Mayor, Excellences, and friends

The Dusko Kondor awards celebrate the love of life and the integrity of the man we have just seen on film who was cold' bloodedly assassinated five years ago.

But these awards have far wider aims.

They are, in the 2nd place, a somber reminder of the multiplicity of atrocities committed in this region not only in war but also in this uneasy postwar period in which we are still deeply mired today, with scores of criminals still at large, still unpunished, and still at work.

They are, thirdly, a celebration of the moral heroes who had the civil courage to resist the war propaganda and the racist hysteria that gripped the crowd two decades ago.

Heroes whom we shall see on film later this morning and some of whom we welcome in person.

We honour, on this twentieth anniversary, the many thousands of **citizens of Sarajevo** who stayed in the city, some who even came back, to face the hardships, the stresses, and the bodily dangers, who died or were wounded, who rescued the injured, who shared what they had, who made jokes and made music, to maintain, amid the chaos all around, your city's centuries old civilisation of harmony.

We honour, posthumously, **Nedeljko Neđo Galić**, who contrived to release over a thousand innocent prisoners from the Heliodrom concentration camp and send them to safety abroad.

We honour **Matija Stević**, who saved, sheltered and secured the exchange of women and children persecuted for their religion, wrote a handbook on *The Rules of Army Conduct in War*, and initiated a public apology to the Moslem citizens of Brcko for what had been done to them.

We honour **Budimir Budo Koprivica**, who in Mostar risked his life to protect his threatened neighbours and their property.

And we honour **Viktor Ivančić**, who became editor-in-chief of the weekly *Feral Tribune* To condemn violence, expose crimes both of war and of peace and, despite ceaseless intimidation, fearlessly speak truth to power.

None of us can know if we would have had the guts to risk our lives for our neighbours as they did.

None of us in our hearts can feel we have proved any right to sit on this platform today with men like these.

So above all these awards demonstrate by their example that, come the moment, each of us does have a choice.

The choice either to submit to the bullies, to go along with the crowd, to be impotent bystanders' or, on the other hand, like them to risk our reputations, our jobs, our families and our health to assert our integrity and summon up the courage to be upstanders, if need be alone.