

SREBRENICA GENOCIDE DENIAL REPORT 2023



MEMORIJALNI CENTAR
SREBRENICA
MEMORIAL CENTER

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IMPRESSUM

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2023 Srebrenica Genocide Denial Report is based on the monitoring of genocide denial from May 2022 to May 2023. Quantitative methods were employed to collect data from the media in preparation for this report. The content and narratives were then carefully analyzed, and recommendations were formulated based on the findings. The 2023 report indicates a decline in the denial of the Srebrenica genocide and the glorification of war criminals compared to previous reporting periods. However, despite the amendments to the Criminal Code of Bosnia and Herzegovina in July 2021, which prohibit and punish genocide denial and the glorification of war criminals, these activities persist on a significant scale. Although the law has been in effect for two years, not a single indictment has been filed against those who deny the genocide, despite the dozens of criminal charges filed.

During the reporting period, a quantitative analysis identified 90 instances of denial in the public and media space of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and neighboring countries. This number represents a decrease when compared to last year's report, which documented 693 cases of denial. It is important to note that the quantity of recorded instances is not the only indicator of society's awareness regarding the Srebrenica genocide.

The research conducted in 2023 reveals that the main deniers of the Srebrenica genocide are Milorad Dodik, the president of the BiH entity of the Republika Srpska (RS), Branimir Kojić, the president of the Organization of Families of Captured and Killed Fighters and Missing Civilians from Srebrenica, and Miodrag Linta, a Member of Parliament in the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia. Other deniers include Serbian tabloids such as *Informer* and *Alo*, Zoran Milanović, the President of the Republic of Croatia, Radovan Kovačević, a delegate in the House of Peoples of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina and SNSD spokesperson, and Nenad Kecmanović, a retired professor and former advisor to Milorad Dodik.

The denial of the genocide takes various forms, with active denial being the most prevalent in 53 cases, followed by relativization in 26 cases, support for the perpetrators in 9 cases, and recognition of the crime but not as genocide in 2 cases. It is evident from the monitoring process that the highest number of genocide denials occurs in July, coinciding with the anniversary and commemoration of the genocide.

In this reporting period, there has been a noticeable trend among Serbian media outlets of de-emphasizing the contextual events of the 1990s, when there were frequent attacks and incidents of

hate speech targeting Albanian inhabitants of Kosovo. The current political climate has also led to a diminished discussion of the Srebrenica genocide among prominent figures in Serbia, with authorities in Belgrade primarily focusing on mass protests in the capital and unresolved issues between Belgrade and Pristina.

In 2023, politicians in the RS entity of BiH continue to be the most vocal in denying the Srebrenica genocide, often utilizing state-owned public media platforms based in Banja Luka to disseminate their views. Additionally, researchers and commentators also actively engage in genocide denial. Their commitment to this practice remains steadfast, irrespective of political changes or the current situation in the region.

In the realm of genocide denial and relativization, a notable addition to the list of deniers is Zoran Milanović, the President of the Republic of Croatia. According to the 2023 research, Milanović is increasingly involved in this practice, which represents a significant departure from previous reports. Given his high political position and influence as the President of Croatia, his emergence as a denier of the genocide carries substantial weight.

Support for genocide denial is often facilitated through institutional connections, which involve providing financial support to organizations, institutes, and associations that propagate narratives contradicting the established facts determined by courts.

Apart from the aforementioned forms, the denial of genocide also manifests in public spaces through graffiti, messaging, the names of public institutions, and street names. Moreover, acts of violence targeted at those who dissent from the denial narrative can be observed in both digital and physical domains. The primary actors involved in promoting denial are from the political sphere, including political parties, current and former party members, as well as public officials. Additionally, individuals associated with the media, cultural and artistic circles, educational and scientific institutions, and various expressions of right-wing activism also contribute to the perpetuation of denial.

THE SREBRENICA MEMORIAL CENTER

The Srebrenica Memorial Center was established as a memorial and cemetery for the victims of the 1995 genocide following a decision by the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2000. The Memorial Center serves as a place of remembrance for the victims of the Srebrenica genocide and is dedicated to preserving history and confronting the forces of ignorance and hatred that make such atrocities possible.

Our ongoing research initiatives are central to fulfilling our mission. These include activities such as collecting personal artefacts of genocide victims, documenting oral history testimonies, and analyzing relevant judicial proceedings to hold the perpetrators of genocide and war crimes accountable. In the face of persistent denial, we seek to promote the judicially-established truth about the Srebrenica genocide through our publications, multi-media content, and other educational resources which serve to raise awareness and inform the public about the genocide.

The Day of Remembrance of the Srebrenica Genocide and the commemoration of its victims, held each year on July 11th, is a cornerstone of our annual program. In addition to the commemoration itself, the Memorial Center organizes a variety of activities surrounding this event, including youth programs and academic conferences, through which we bring together individuals from across the country and around the world to learn about and discuss the Srebrenica genocide.

Over the past three years, we have undertaken significant renovations of the Library, Archives, and Administration Building, thanks to the support of international and domestic donors. We have also installed new permanent exhibitions and are currently in the process of creating a comprehensive exhibition that will be a focal point for visitors to the Memorial Center.

Throughout our work, we collaborate extensively with our partner organizations at the national, regional, and global levels. We have cultivated partnerships with over 50 institutions, allowing us to reach wider audiences and share valuable knowledge and experience. When it comes to international exchange programs and volunteer engagement, we are one of the leading institutions in BiH. Our volunteer program has attracted a dedicated group of individuals who offer their assistance with research, translation, and various tasks. Our staff members have also visited partner memorials and museums, exchanging experiences related to exhibition design, preservation of artefacts and documents, and the development of educational programs. We are proud to have engaged over 100 associates, the majority of whom reside in or originate from eastern Bosnia.

We have also successfully established high-quality resources for scholars and professionals working in fields such as history, law, and human rights. Through encouraging researchers to visit Srebrenica and providing access to our Documentation Center, Archive, Library, and other facilities, we seek to foster a deeper level of scholarly engagement that will contribute to the prevention of atrocities worldwide.

Likewise, developing educational programs for teaching students of all ages about the genocide in Srebrenica has been an important part of our work. To this end, we have recently published the *Bosnian Genocide Reader*, which is tailored to higher education, as well as a document containing recommended approaches to teaching about the genocide in secondary schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina. With these efforts, we aim to ensure that learning about the Srebrenica genocide becomes an integral part of education in schools across BiH and around the world.

The Srebrenica Memorial Center Dialogue Committee, composed of representatives from the Mothers of Srebrenica Association, the academic community, and activists, has visited sites of suffering and remembrance worldwide, including Goražde, Stolac, Mostar, Dachau, Mauthausen, Grabovica, Jasenovac, Ustica, and many others. Through these visits, they convey the message that dialogue should be founded on facts, respect, and empathy, and that any form of violence against innocent people is unacceptable within a healthy society.

We have successfully lobbied for amendments to the Criminal Code of Bosnia and Herzegovina prohibiting the denial of genocide as well as played a role in the adoption of a cantonal regulations in Sarajevo supporting those affected by the genocide.

However, our fight is far from over. At the Memorial Center, we recognize the danger posed by historical revisionism to the processes of peacebuilding and transitional justice. Through an evidence-based approach that promotes inclusivity, inter-ethnic dialogue, and peacebuilding, we are committed to confronting the pernicious forces that seek to deny Bosnia's historical experiences.

This report represents the collective efforts of the entire team at the Memorial Center, led by our director, Dr. Emir Suljagić, and the Steering Board President, Hamdija Fejzić. It serves as the foundation of our stance against genocide deniers. It is essential that we are aware of their identities, the media platforms that amplify their voices, and the consequences of their actions. We place our trust in the rule of law and hope that the judicial institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina will take all necessary measures to combat the denial of genocide and degradation of victims.

FOREWORD: DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

This report marks four years of the Memorial Center's meticulous documentation of the denial of the Srebrenica genocide. This denial, however, has existed for far longer. It began in July 1995, in concert with the genocide itself, when our victims' remains were moved from one mass grave to another among the vast network of mass graves scattered across Eastern Bosnia.

The denial analyzed in this report, which encompasses the realms of politics, academia, the media, and popular culture, is a direct continuation of the hiding of bodies. It serves a variety of functions, the evasion of accountability being only the first. At its core, this denial aims to establish a regime of silence – to bury our voices so deep underground that we who are living become as mute as our dead.

Through ensuring our silence, the perpetrators of genocide hope to realign themselves in the eyes of the world with the norms and values which they so savagely violated. And so long as the keepers of these norms, the influential among the international community, continue to ennoble them with normal relations and allow them to speak from the podium which they have carved out of our silence, what reason would they have to think that these hopes are misguided?

With this report, we work to shatter the silence. We fight to occupy space not below ground, but above it, in full sight and hearing of both domestic and international audiences. By exposing those who seek to bury us beneath the sodden earth of historical memory – their identities, their tactics, and the structural machinery in which they operate – we assert our own voice and speak for our loved ones who have been brutally and eternally silenced.

This publication comes at a time of tremendous global and regional contingency. The echoes of the aggression against Bosnia and Herzegovina resound in the Ukrainian conflict, and the insidious rhetorical practices confronted by this report can already be found emanating from the Russian regime. The horrors of our experience also reverberate through many recent events in the Western Balkans. On one hand, the turbulence of the present political landscape has diverted the attention of many for whom genocide denial was once a preoccupation, contributing to a quantitative decline in instances of denial during this reporting period as compared to previous years. On the other hand, never since the end of the war in this country have the Bosniak people faced such dire existential uncertainty.

In light of all of these factors, I am especially pleased to present the 2023 Srebrenica Genocide Denial Report to the readership of our country and beyond. This report embodies the diligent efforts of a team of bright and impassioned young researchers who commit themselves to the highest standards of intellectual and moral integrity. It is in such individuals and such initiatives that we find hope for the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the world at large.

Dr. Emir Suljagić

Director of the Srebrenica Memorial Center

EDITORS' NOTES

This is the fourth annual Srebrenica Genocide Denial Report, and the third edition to quantify the denial of the genocide in regional media and political discourse. Upon comparing the quantitative data to that of previous years, our readers will observe a significant decline in recorded instances of denial during the period covered by this report. For this, there are several possible explanations.

The most optimistic interpretation suggests that the efforts made in recent years by the Srebrenica Memorial Center and its allies to combat the scourge of genocide denial are bearing fruit – a heartening prospect to whatever extent it may be true. However, there are at least two additional factors that should be taken into account.

The first factor is the recent legislation criminalizing the denial of war crimes and the glorification of convicted perpetrators in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which was enacted in 2021. With denial and its associated expressions now punishable by up to five years in prison, a decline in these practices, at least within the country's borders, might reasonably be expected. However, this expectation would be predicated on two misguided assumptions: firstly, that the law in question, for which there has yet to be a single indictment, is being effectively enforced; secondly, that those who laud the likes of Radovan Karadžić and Ratko Mladić have any deference for the rule of law.

The other factor that ought to be considered is the recent disruptions to the political climate in what are normally the region's most fertile grounds of historical revisionism – mass protests in Belgrade, clashes in northern Kosovo, and tensions in Podgorica, to name only a few. These exigent crises have unsurprisingly diverted the attention and resources of the Serb political elite away from their more quotidian pastimes, to include negating the Bosniak historical experience, minimizing the mass slaughter of civilians, and concocting elaborate narratives of victimhood and conspiracy.

All three of these factors have likely had some bearing on this year's decrease in denial, and all merit further exploration within academic and policy debates. Notwithstanding, there is one important caveat to bear in mind, which is that the quantitative study of denial only paints a partial picture. In all our academic and analytical undertakings, amidst the algorithms, infographics, and theoretical frameworks, we must never lose sight of the fact that any attempt to quantify these practices within the circumscribed realm of what is publicly accessible can only ever reflect a fraction of what survivors and returnees to Eastern Bosnia experience.

In the aftermath of genocide, denial is a form psychological violence. It violates survivors, forcing them to relive their most traumatic experiences while enduring the indignity of being belittled and disbelieved. When institutionalized, denial obstructs the path to justice, fostering an environment permissive of impunity. It is a catalyst of destabilization, perpetuating division, precluding societal healing, and empowering extremist ideologies that glorify past violence and call for its repetition. Denial seeks to erase historical memories, waging an attack on the cultural identity of victim groups long after the guns have fallen silent. It marginalizes these communities, isolates and silences survivors, and discommends empathy towards their suffering.

This continues to be the reality on the ground in Bosnia and Herzegovina, nurtured by those who deny the Srebrenica genocide as well as the nation-wide campaign of systematic violence that culminated in it. It is a war taking place against the Bosniak people on multiple fronts, spanning all sectors and institutions of society. As such, it demands an equally robust and multifaceted response.

These annual reports, which expose the ploys, patterns, and practices of Srebrenica genocide denial, form part of the resistance. Published in both the Bosnian and English languages, they aim to mobilize domestic as well as foreign audiences to join the fight against denial however they are able. Indeed, the implications of this struggle extend far beyond the borders of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In championing the truth of the Srebrenica genocide, we defend the universal values of civilization, closing ranks with communities around the world threatened by persecution, historical revisionism, and hatred.

As the editor of the English edition of this report, I am honored and humbled to make a modest contribution to the work of the Srebrenica Memorial Center, an institution which stands at the vanguard of truth, remembrance, and justice. In this capacity, I beseech our international readership, for the fourth consecutive year, to continue to stand with Srebrenica. By amplifying the voices of survivors and families of victims, who are the bedrock of this report, we affirm that their burden need not and must not be carried alone. Preserving the memory of the past is a responsibility incumbent upon all of us, in order to uphold the rights and dignity of all humanity and ensure that the atrocities of the Srebrenica genocide are never repeated.

Monica Hanson-Green

In the fourth Genocide Denial Report by the Srebrenica Memorial Center, we have focused on several topics. We draw special attention to the issue of non-prosecution of genocide deniers in Srebrenica. Unfortunately, the adoption of the Decision of the High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Valentin Inzko, which introduced amendments to the Criminal Code of Bosnia and Herzegovina in mid-2021, including a prohibition on the denial of genocide and the glorification of convicted criminals, did not stop the practice of these phenomena. Although several criminal charges have been filed against individuals who denied the genocide in various ways, the Prosecutor's Office of Bosnia and Herzegovina has failed to pursue a single indictment. Since the amendment of the law, there has been no lack of direct genocide denial. While there has been a noticeable reduction in BiH, this continues to occur, particularly in public discourse.

In the 1940s, when Raphael Lemkin toiled to designate the "crime of crimes" with the term "genocide," his primary objective was to establish a foundation within international law to prevent and punish such grave crimes in the future. With the adoption of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, his life's ideals were achieved. In addition to harmonizing legal norms, this development made it possible to indict the perpetrators to bring them before the courts, and to punish them for the crime of genocide. Ton Zwaan, Helen Fein, Karl Jaspers, Zygmunt Bauman and many others state that genocide as such is a state-level crime. It is conceived, shaped, organized, financed, and implemented by political elites, who, after extensive preparations, mobilize the masses in various ways. In the end, this project also includes those who operate excavators and trucks with which they dig primary, secondary, and tertiary mass graves in which to bury members of the group that is the target of the genocidal project. Thus, they all participate in the executing the order with genocidal intent that comes from the top. As the process of genocide is carried out 'from the top down,' so the process of denial is carried out and derives from the top.

Unfortunately, in July 1995, at the end of the twentieth century, genocide was committed against Bosniaks in and around Srebrenica, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in Europe. It was adjudicated before the most relevant international courts and thus legally established. And the genocide against Bosniaks was a state project. Today's denial of the genocide against Bosniaks is also a state project, primarily of interest to the leaders of the Serb people in the Republic of Serbia and the Bosnian entity of the Republika Srpska.

In the last thirty years, the relativization of the crime and the denial of the genocide against Bosniaks has encompassed all spheres and aspects of the Serbian establishment. After the aggression, genocide denial continued through academic, cultural, social, and other means. It is apparent that the denial of the genocide has become deeply rooted in key institutions within the RS entity of BiH and within Serbia, and that it is supported by the wider public.

Institutional denial and non-prosecution of genocide deniers has become a first-rate problem, and its solution is a prerequisite for building peace and prosperity in the region and in the state and society of BiH. Denying the genocide and glorifying the criminals does not allow survivors to feel safe in an environment characterized by the political and institutional negation of their own experience, despite all the available arguments and established facts. This is something which we refer to, to an extent, in this report.

With this report, we highlight the frequent and explicit forms of attacks and attempts to discredit the mothers of Srebrenica and other activists who advocate justice, truth, and peace building. We must and should make our contribution – for the sake of the genocide victims, their relatives, and the survivors; for the mothers of Srebrenica and all those who dedicated their lives to the truth and so that a shred of justice might be achieved in this world.

Those who deny genocide are ready to incite, organize, and commit it again. That is why we need to identify them and record their names forever. With this report, we present the truth, but we also warn. Through the recognition, thematization, and analysis of the ways in which the genocide in Srebrenica is denied, through the annual report on the denial of genocide, we warn of the consequences these phenomena pose for society at large.

As an editor of the 2023 Srebrenica Genocide Denial Report, I have been given the exceptional honor of personally making a modest contribution to the work of the Srebrenica Memorial Center. Modest, because I am fully aware of all of the historically significant projects this Memorial Center has carried out and will continue to carry out in the future. The Srebrenica Memorial Center has become the strongest bulwark of the defense of the truth about the genocide against Bosniaks. It is a great honor and experience to cooperate with the employees and associates of the Memorial Center. Their life's mission, their commitment and enthusiasm, their intellectual and moral integrity, is the greatest source of hope that the victims of the genocide and crimes committed in Bosnia and Herzegovina between 1992 and 1995 will not be forgotten.

Dr. Muamer Džananović

A HISTORY OF THE DENIAL OF THE BOSNIAK GENOCIDE¹

The denial of the Bosniak genocide and historical revisionism are very prominent issues in Bosnian society, particularly in recent years. The 2021 amendment of the Criminal Code of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which explicitly prohibited the denial of genocide and the celebration of convicted war criminals, has not put an end to these practices.

Recent research has primarily focused on contemporary instances of genocide denial, but it is important to also shed light on earlier denials of the genocide and atrocities perpetrated against Bosniaks, which have been ongoing since the aggression against the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The systematic pattern of institutional denial that has persisted, to varying degrees, over the past thirty years can be seen in the denial of concentration camps, mass graves, the Tuzla Kapija massacre, the Sarajevo Markale attacks, and numerous other crimes, culminating in the denial of the Srebrenica genocide. Given the extensive ways in which the genocide against Bosniaks is denied, this section will only focus on select cases.

The denial of genocide and atrocities typically begins with the planning of the acts themselves and continues throughout their execution. Simon Massey describes this as a “growing denial,” characterized by the development and implementation of plans and strategies to deny the genocide.² Thus, in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), the denial of the genocide was already in place by the outbreak of the aggression and persisted throughout its duration. Radovan Karadžić and his political followers in BiH, as well as the authorities in Belgrade, consistently denied the war crimes being committed. For instance, Karadžić’s denial of the atrocities taking place in concentration camps led to the eventual discovery of these camps in 1992, whereupon the images of terrified and tortured people shocked the world. The authorities of the self-proclaimed Republika Srpska (RS) responded by reinforcing and institutionalizing these narratives of denial. As Emir Suljagić points out, their reports on the conditions in the so-called “refugee centers” were “no more than a brazen attempt to suppress damning evidence of the human rights abuses and inhumane conditions which characterized these facilities.”³ Subsequent testimonies from survivors revealed the extent of the local Serbs’ depravity,

1 This section contains portions of an unpublished work co-authored by Muamer Džananović and Hikmet Karčić.

2 Simon Massey, “The Bosnian Genocide and the ‘Continuum of Denial,’” in *Denial: The Final Stage of Genocide?* ed. John M. Cox, Amal Khoury, and Sarah Minslow (New York: Routledge, 2022), 113.

3 Emir Suljagić, “Denial of Genocide and Other War Crimes Committed in Bosnia as a Form of Collective Memory,” *Bosnian Studies: Journal for Research of Bosnian Thought and Culture* 6, no. 1 (2022): 4–23.

with women being imprisoned for the purpose of rape and men being coerced into committing various atrocities and acts of sexual violence.⁴

As noted by Edina Bećirević, the transcripts of discussions among Serb military and political leaders during the war offer ample evidence of genocidal intent as well as of the public relations strategies for denying the crimes to be committed, which were planned well in advance. A statement by Ratko Mladić offers a characteristic example:

We don't dare say we will destroy Sarajevo, no, we won't. We want to preserve Sarajevo, we need Sarajevo. We won't say that we will tear down the power line or turn off the water, no, because that brings America to its feet, but... One day, there won't be any water in all of Sarajevo. Why's that, we don't know... The same with electricity... We will tell the world that they were shooting, hit the transmission line, and the power went out, that they shot the water tanks... That's diplomacy.⁵

Genocide denial encompasses academic, political, and media propaganda. However, in BiH, it also takes on physical manifestations, in the form of the numerous mass graves that have been discovered throughout the country. These include Crni vrh, Tomašica, Lake Perućac, and the Korićani Cliffs, as well as the numerous primary, secondary, and even tertiary mass graves in and around Srebrenica from July 1995. These graves serve as lasting evidence of the cruelty and brutality inflicted upon Bosniaks by the planners and perpetrators of these crimes. What is more, they testify to the extensive network of political, military, and civil structures involved in concealing the evidence of these widespread atrocities.

Most of these mass graves were and still are situated within the territory of the RS, with their locations known to the RS political leadership at that time. Since the war's end, there has been a continuous refusal to disclose these locations, which bolsters the denial of the genocide to this day. In late 1995, the Army of the Republic of Srpska (*Vojska Republike Srpske*; VRS) ordered the exhumation of the bodies of those killed in Srebrenica and its surrounding areas during July 1995. Using heavy machinery, the bodies were subsequently relocated to secondary and tertiary mass graves, resulting in extensive damage to the remains. The intention behind this was to ensure that the bodies would never be found, as

4 See: Hikmet Karčić, *Torture, Humiliate, Kill: Inside the Bosnian Serb Camp System* (University of Michigan Press).

5 Quoted in: Edina Bećirević, "The Issue of Genocidal Intent and Denial of Genocide: A Case Study of Bosnia and Herzegovina," *East European Politics and Societies: and Cultures* 24, no. 4 (2010): 484.

they believed that without physical evidence, their crimes could be more easily denied.

Through the efforts of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the abundance of evidence, legal procedures, and judicial verdicts, an international consensus on the occurrence of genocide has been established. Nevertheless, the denial of these atrocities has persisted within Serb centers of power in BiH and Serbia. This denial takes various forms, including “direct denial” and a more subtle “restricted form,” in which the denial is curtailed by external pressures.⁶ The restricted form, while not explicitly denying that an event took place, tends towards falsehoods and fallacious arguments in its limitations.

A prime example of this can be found in the RS government reports about the events in Srebrenica. Several such reports claiming to have ‘uncovered the truth’ were drafted in response to international pressure, including the “Report about Case Srebrenica” authored by Darko Trifunović and published by the RS Institute for Relations with the International Tribunal for War Crimes in the Former Yugoslavia. This report denies that there was a genocide in Srebrenica and accuses the International Committee of the Red Cross of deliberately falsifying information regarding the killings. It further claims that 2,000 Bosniak soldiers were killed, with 1,600 deaths attributed to combat.⁷ The ICTY Trial Chamber reviewed this document, describing it as “one of the worst examples of revisionism.”⁸

In 2004, due to international pressure, the RS established a special commission of inquiry for Srebrenica. Under continued pressure, the commission produced a report which acknowledged that the military and police forces of the RS had indeed committed the crime of genocide. The report also identified several thousand perpetrators involved in these crimes.⁹ However, this acknowledgement only represented a temporary divergence from the ongoing denial of the genocide, which further fueled animosity among Serbs towards the international community and reinforced Serb narratives of victimization.

Many years later, in 2018, RS political leader Milorad Dodik denounced the 2004 report on Srebrenica and demanded a new investigation. He claimed that the report contained “false

6 Massey, *The Bosnian Genocide*, 120.

7 Anes Alić and Dragan Stanimirović, “Imaginary Massacres?” *Time*, September 11, 2002, <https://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,349957,00.html>.

8 ICTY, Prosecutor v. Miroslav Deronjić, IT-02-61-S, Trial Chamber, Judgement, March 30, 2004, para. 257.

9 . Hikmet Karčić, “From the Selimović Case to the Srebrenica Commission: The Fight to Recognize the Srebrenica Genocide,” *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 35, no. 3 (2015): 370-379.

information” and that “the crime in Srebrenica was a staged tragedy with the aim of demonizing the Serbs.”¹⁰ In 2019, Dodik formed two new commissions: one to investigate “the suffering of all peoples in the Srebrenica region during the period 1992-1995” and the other to examine the “suffering of Serbs in Sarajevo during the period 1991-1995.” These investigations were conducted by the RS Center for Research on War, War Crimes, and Tracing Missing Persons. One of the main objectives of this center is to deny the genocide against Bosniaks and to exaggerate the crimes committed against Serbs during the war in BiH. The findings of these investigations absolved the VRS from culpability for crimes, made false claims about the siege of Sarajevo, and denied the Bosniak genocide in and around Srebrenica in July 1995, relegating this event instead to the status of “war crime.” Additionally, the number of genocide victims was minimized, with the report claiming that the only Bosniak casualties were 3,000 soldiers from the Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, while emphasizing that Bosniaks killed a significant number of Serbs in the vicinity of Srebrenica during the war.¹¹

Furthermore, the denial is not limited to the Srebrenica genocide, but also extends to massacres such as the those at Markale in Sarajevo and Kapija in Tuzla. In both instances, the denial of these crimes also began with the aggression. During this period, Radovan Karadžić openly demonstrated on Pale television how truth could be distorted. Regarding the crimes in Sarajevo, he stated:

We know that, and we have to tell the Muslim people, and in the end, when everything settles down, we will try some people who did it, who bombed Sarajevo – Muslims with Muslim weapons who planted explosives in the streets of Sarajevo to kill their own people and then indict the Serbs. That thing has already been exposed, everyone in the world is laughing. When, for example, a dignitary arrives, and then... a mortar hits the presidency building, everyone laughs. Everyone knows it’s a show.¹²

The first documented concrete case of denial and a seemingly premeditated strategy to negate a crime occurred during the massacre on Vasa Miskina Street in Sarajevo on May 27th, 1992, when 26 civilians were killed, and 108 were wounded while waiting in line for bread.¹³ Serbian media at the time reported that the

10 Documentation Centre of Republic of Srpska – Bureau of Government of RS for Relation with ICTY, “Report about Case Srebrenica (the first part),” 2002, <http://www.slobodan-milosevic.org/documents/srebrenica.pdf>.

11 N1 Belgrade, “RS Commission says Genocide Not Committed in Srebrenica,” *N1*, August 24, 2021, <https://n1info.rs/english/news/rs-commission-says-genocide-not-committed-in-srebrenica/>.

12 ICTY, Prosecutor v. Radovan Karadžić, IT-95-5/18-T, Exhibit No. P1274, SRT Video Clip Depicting an Interview with Radovan Karadžić in Pale (end time 01:37:8).

13 “The Accused [Radovan Karadžić] first claims that the only incident that happened on May 27th, 1992, was the shelling of Vasa Miskina Street and presents arguments to the effect that there is no evidence that the shelling was carried out by Bosnian Serb forces. The accused then disputes the prosecu-

incident was caused by “landmines” and “self-shelling” orchestrated by Bosnian authorities to “elicit sympathy and reactions from the international community.” This was the claim made in an article titled “The Streets were Mined,” published in Belgrade’s *Politika* on June 28th, 1992. Milorad Cvijović, a colonel in the Yugoslav People’s Army (*Jugoslavenska narodna armija*; JNA), was quoted as saying that the street was not shelled but that an explosive device had been detonated there.¹⁴

These fallacious arguments were used by Radovan Karadžić in his efforts to exculpate himself and the VRS before the ICTY. Furthermore, this revisionist narrative, formulated during the war itself, persists to this day. This is apparent from recent efforts to exonerate convicted war criminal Novak Đukić from the Tuzla Kapija massacre by staging ‘reconstructions’ of the event at testing sites in Serbia. Following from the argumentation used in 1992 by *Politika*, these reproductions attempt to prove that the Serb army was not responsible for firing the missiles on Tuzla in May 1995 and that such an attack could not have resulted in such a high number of civilians deaths and injuries. These pseudo-experiments also served as the basis for the production of revisionist documentaries and books.¹⁵

Simultaneously, there has been an ongoing institutional campaign and substantial financial investment aimed at engaging a multitude of academics and researchers at the international level to participate in the denial of the genocide against Bosniaks.¹⁶

The Srebrenica Historical Project (SHP), led by American-Serbian lawyer Stefan Karganović. Although initially presented as an independent non-governmental organization, the SHP was primarily funded from the budget of the RS, receiving nearly a million euros between 2008 and 2014. While financing was eventually halted due to alleged misuse of funds, the organization remained highly active in denying the genocide during that period and published two additional books in 2011 and 2021.¹⁷

tion’s allegations that Mladić ordered the indiscriminate shelling of Sarajevo...” ICTY, Prosecutor v. Radovan Karadžić, IT-95-5/18-T, Trial Chamber, Judgement, March 24, 2016, VOLUME III, para. 4020.

14 A.K., “Ulice su bile minirane [The Streets were Mined],” *Politika*, June 28, 1992, 7.

15 Muamer Džananović, “Institutional Denial of Genocide against Bosniaks and Discrimination against Returnees in Republika Srpska,” *Bosnian Studies: Journal for Research of Bosnian Thought and Culture* VII, No. 1 (2023): 76-77.

16 For more on this: Elvedin Mulagić, *Negiranje genocida nad Bošnjacima [Denial of the Genocide against Bosniaks]*. Sarajevo: University of Sarajevo Institute for Research on Crimes against Humanity and International Law, 2014, 178-200.

17 Danijel Kovačević, “Bosnian Serbs Probe Srebrenica Lobbyist’s Alleged Fraud,” *Balkan Insight*, April 8, 2016, <https://balkaninsight.com/2016/04/08/bosnian-serb-police-investigates-us-lobbyist-for-embezzlement-04-08-2016/>.

Moreover, the SHP played a role in financing other books that also deny the genocide. Numerous authors have contributed to this denial through their publications and works.

Furthermore, Serbian academics have organized conferences with the explicit purpose of denying the genocide. The first such conference, organized by the Serbian Orthodox Church in 1996, featured Radovan Karadžić as the keynote speaker. On this occasion, he stated,

That's why I wonder: was this a war? War has its own being, its causes, goals, a beginning and an end, its own Clausewitz. This war was not such a given. Here, the cause of the war was the mere existence of a nation. As long as that nation exists, will its existence be a justified and understandable *casus belli*?¹⁸

In 2009, the SHP held a conference in Moscow at the Russian Academy of Sciences, where Serbian academics and scientists denied the genocide against Bosniaks. In 2015, the SHP held another conference in Banja Luka titled "Srebrenica: From a Political Weapon to a Means of Achieving Peace in BiH." That same year, the Museum of Genocide Victims in Belgrade organized a conference in collaboration with the Russian Strategic Cultural Fund, which also denied the genocide and placed the blame on Bosniaks and international actors, particularly the United States.¹⁹ In 2016, the conference "Suffering of the Serbs of the Srebrenica Region in the 20th Century"²⁰ was held, with the participation of Vinko Pandurević, a convicted war criminal who served as the commander of the Zvornik Brigade of the VRS. Furthermore, in 2019, a conference titled "International Conference: Srebrenica, Reality and Manipulations" took place in Banja Luka, resulting in the publication of a collection of papers that concluded that genocide was not committed in Srebrenica.²¹

In recent years, government officials have been at the forefront of denying the Srebrenica genocide. Since 2020, the Srebrenica Memorial Center has published annual reports on the denial of the Srebrenica genocide, which have identified over 900 instances of public denial of genocide between May 2020 and May 2022. These denials predominantly occur in Serbia, Montenegro, and the RS

18 "The Lamb of God and the Beast from the Abyss: Philosophy of War," *Rastko Project*, 1996, https://www.rastko.rs/filosofija/jagnje/summaries.html#_Toc470869125.

19 SRNA, "Konferencija o Srebrenici: Istina tek treba da bude utvrđena [Conference on Srebrenica: The Truth has yet to be Established]," *RTRS*, July 4, 2015, <http://www.rtrs.tv/vijesti/vijest.php?id=157740>.

20 Museum of Genocide Victims, "Konferencija: 'Stradanje Srba srebreničkog kraja u 20. Veku' [Conference: 'Suffering of the Serbs of the Srebrenica Region in the 20th Century']," *muzejgenocida.rs*, June 6, 2016, <https://bit.ly/40w7spS>.

21 Milovan Milutinović, ed., "Srebrenica: Reality and Manipulation," Organization of commanding officers of the Army of the Republic of Srpska, Independent university Banja Luka, Institute for research on the suffering of the Serbs in XX-century Belgrade, Banja Luka, 2019.

entity of BiH. The deniers primarily include the Serb political elite in Serbia and BiH, such as Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić, Serbian Prime Minister Ana Brnabić, and RS President Milorad Dodik.²²

Given the close relationship between the media and governments in the region, it comes as no surprise that the Serbian media is an active participant in denying the genocide. Media outlets and personalities frequently employ editorial measures to create content that denies the genocide. According to the Srebrenica Memorial Center's report on genocide denial in 2022, there were 49 documented incidents of media outlets directly denying the genocide or serving as a platform for denial between April 2021 and 2022.²³

Over the past three decades, the distortion and denial of the Bosniak genocide have permeated all spheres and forms of the Serb establishment. Following the aggression, denial of the genocide continued through academic, cultural, social, and various other avenues. It is evident that the denial of the genocide has become deeply entrenched within key institutions of the RS entity of BiH and Serbia, garnering support from a broader segment of society. This leads to the conclusion that the denial of the genocide and atrocities perpetrated in BiH began concurrently with their commission. International scholars of genocide also describe this stage of denial, and the history of the denial of the genocide against Bosniaks attests to their observations.

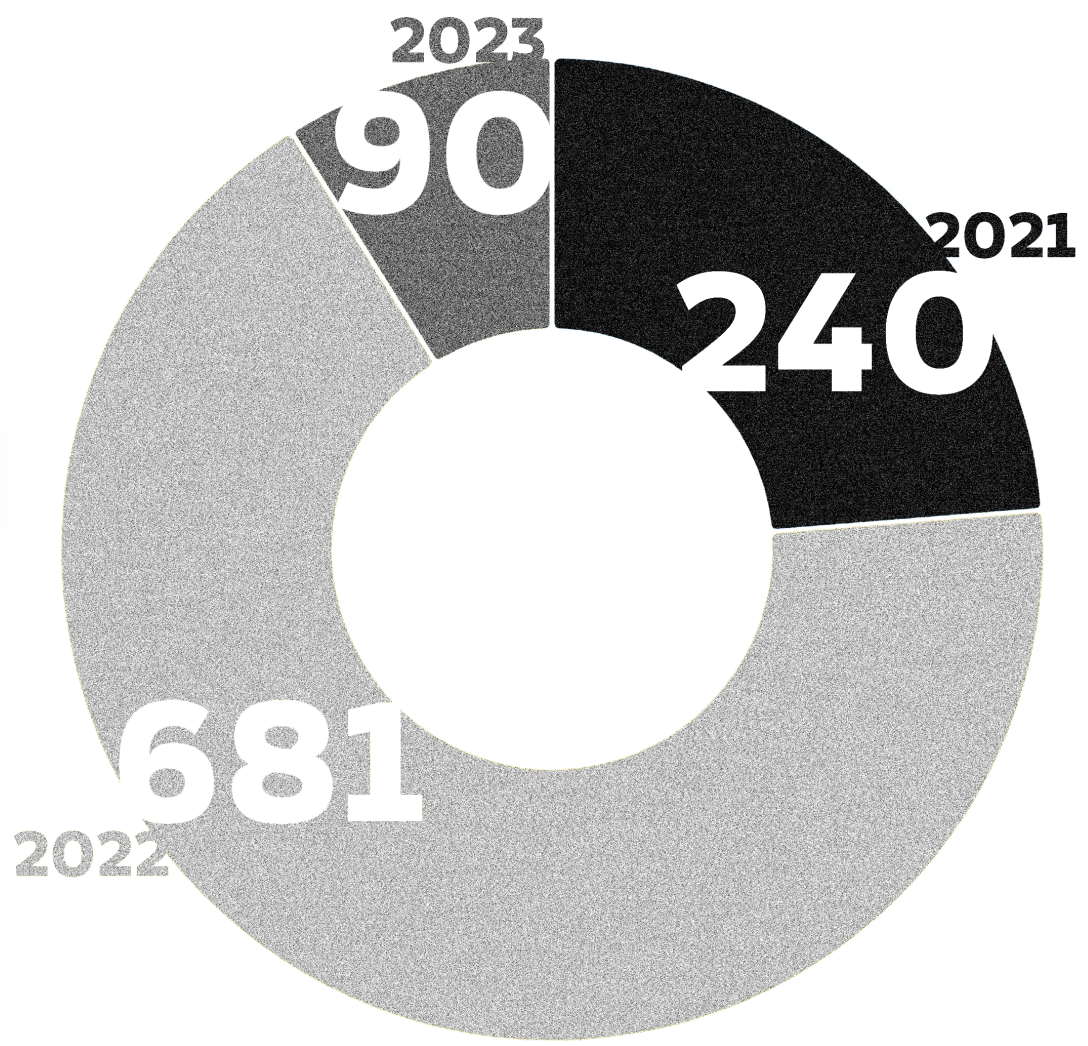
22 Monica Hanson-Green, "Srebrenica Genocide Denial Report 2020," *Srebrenica Memorial Center*, 2020, https://srebrenicamemorial.org/assets/photos/editor/Srebrenica_Genocide_Denial_Repor.pdf; Tijana Cvjetičanin, Tijana, et.al. "Srebrenica Genocide Denial Report 2021," *Srebrenica Memorial Center*, 2021, <https://srebrenicamemorial.org/assets/files/1625819683-srebrenica-genocide-denial-report-2021-english-language.pdf>; Adem Mehmedović, Adem, et. al. "Srebrenica Genocide Denial Report 2022," *Srebrenica Memorial Center*, 2022, https://srebrenicamemorial.org/assets/photos/editor/mcs_izvjestaj_ENG_2022_FINAL_DI.pdf.

23 Mehmedović et al, "Srebrenica Genocide Denial Report 2022," 24-25.

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF GENOCIDE DENIAL

Since the beginning of 2020, the Memorial Center has been committed to monitoring and documenting the denial of the Srebrenica genocide. Our efforts include enhancing media monitoring mechanisms, fostering collaboration with researchers, conducting regular assessments, and implementing an alert system to identify new incidents of genocide denial.

During the reporting period for 2023, a total of 90 cases of genocide denial were identified in the media landscape of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the surrounding region. This figure represents a notable decline compared to last year's report, which documented 693 instances of denial. However, it is important to note that the number of recorded cases is not the sole indicator of societal awareness regarding the Srebrenica genocide.



According to the research conducted in 2023, prominent figures such as **Milorad Dodik**, the president of the Republika Srpska entity in BiH, **Branimir Kojić**, the president of the Organization of Families of Captured and Killed Fighters and Missing Civilians from Srebrenica, and **Miodrag Linta**, a Member of Parliament in the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia, persist as key deniers of the Srebrenica genocide.



Other noteworthy participants in the denial of the genocide included Serbian tabloids, namely *Informer* and *Alo*, as well as Croatian President Zoran Milanović, Radovan Kovačević, a delegate in the House of Peoples of the BiH Parliament and SNSD spokesperson, and Nenad Kecmanović, a retired professor and former advisor to Milorad Dodik.

TOP 10 DENIERS 2023



The most common form of genocide denial recorded was active denial (53 instances), followed by relativization (26 cases), support for the perpetrators (9 cases), and recognition of a crime but not genocide (2 cases).

FORMS OF DENIAL

53

ACTIVE DENIAL
denial

26

RELATIVIZATION
(justification and/or
comparing to the other crimes)

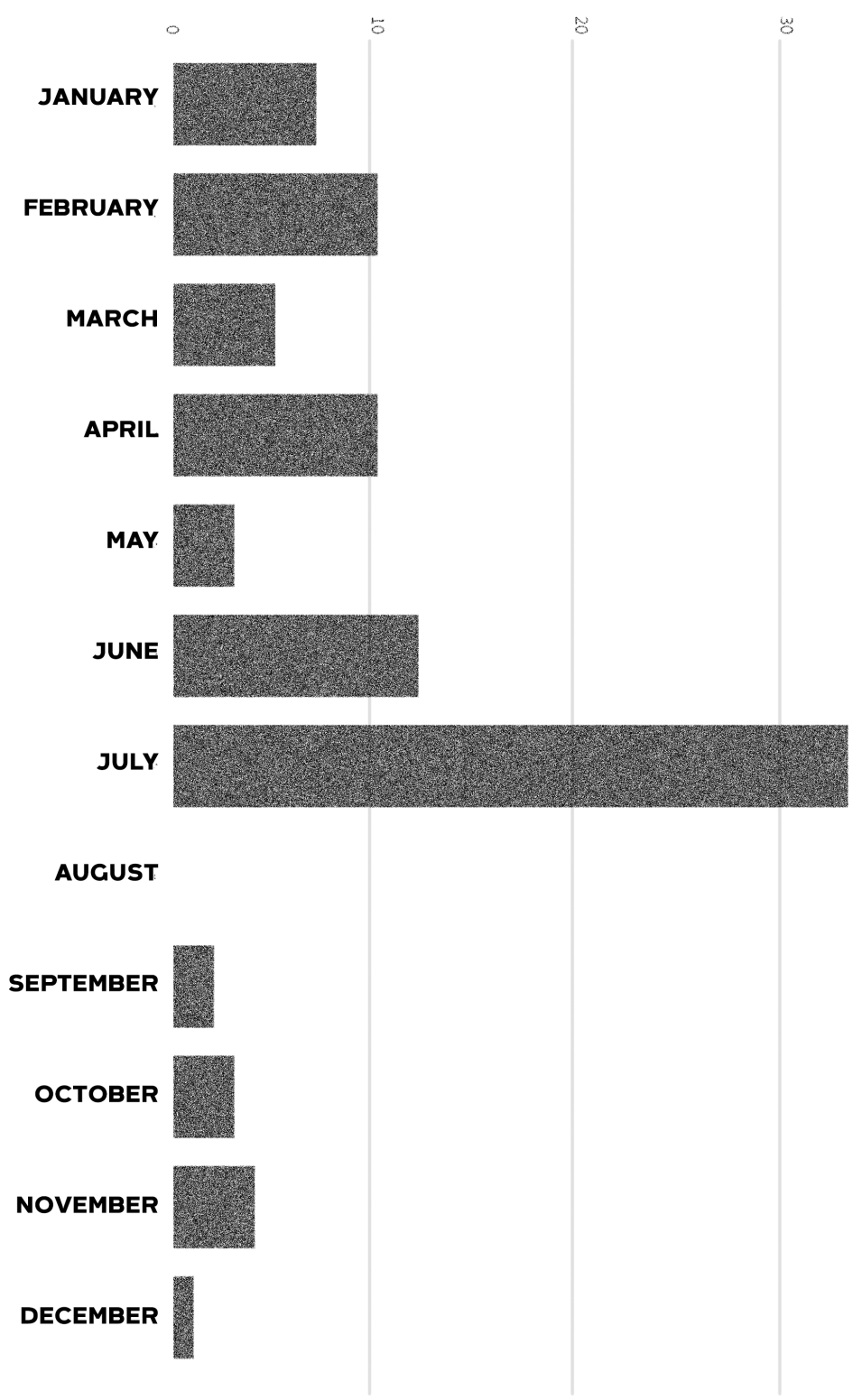
9

SUPPORT TO PERPETRATORS
(doesn't need explicit mention of genocide)

2

**AKNOWLEDGING CRIME
BUT NOT GENOCIDE**

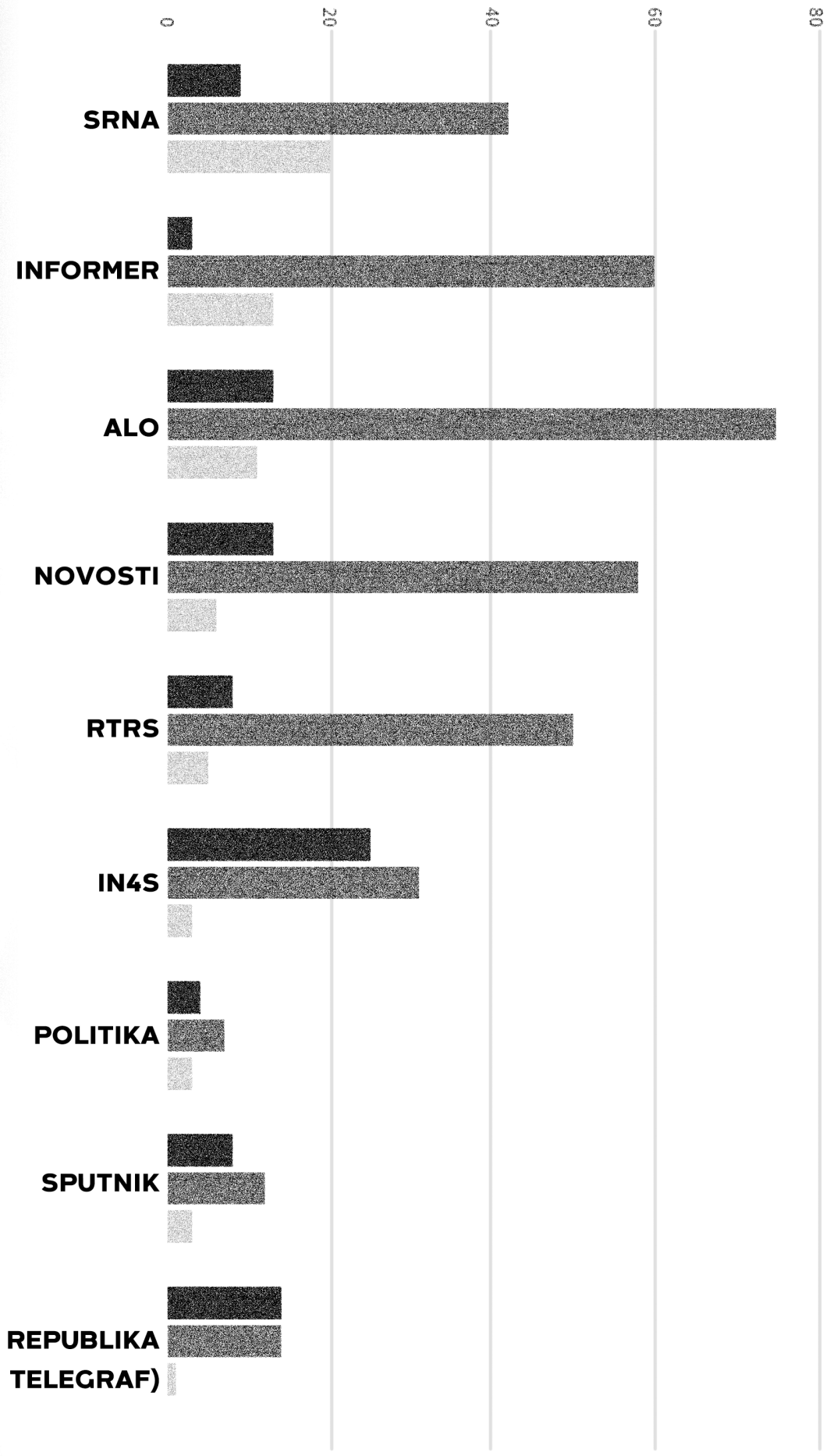
The monthly monitoring of genocide denial demonstrates that the majority of instances occur during the month of July, when the anniversary and annual commemoration is held for the victims of the genocide.



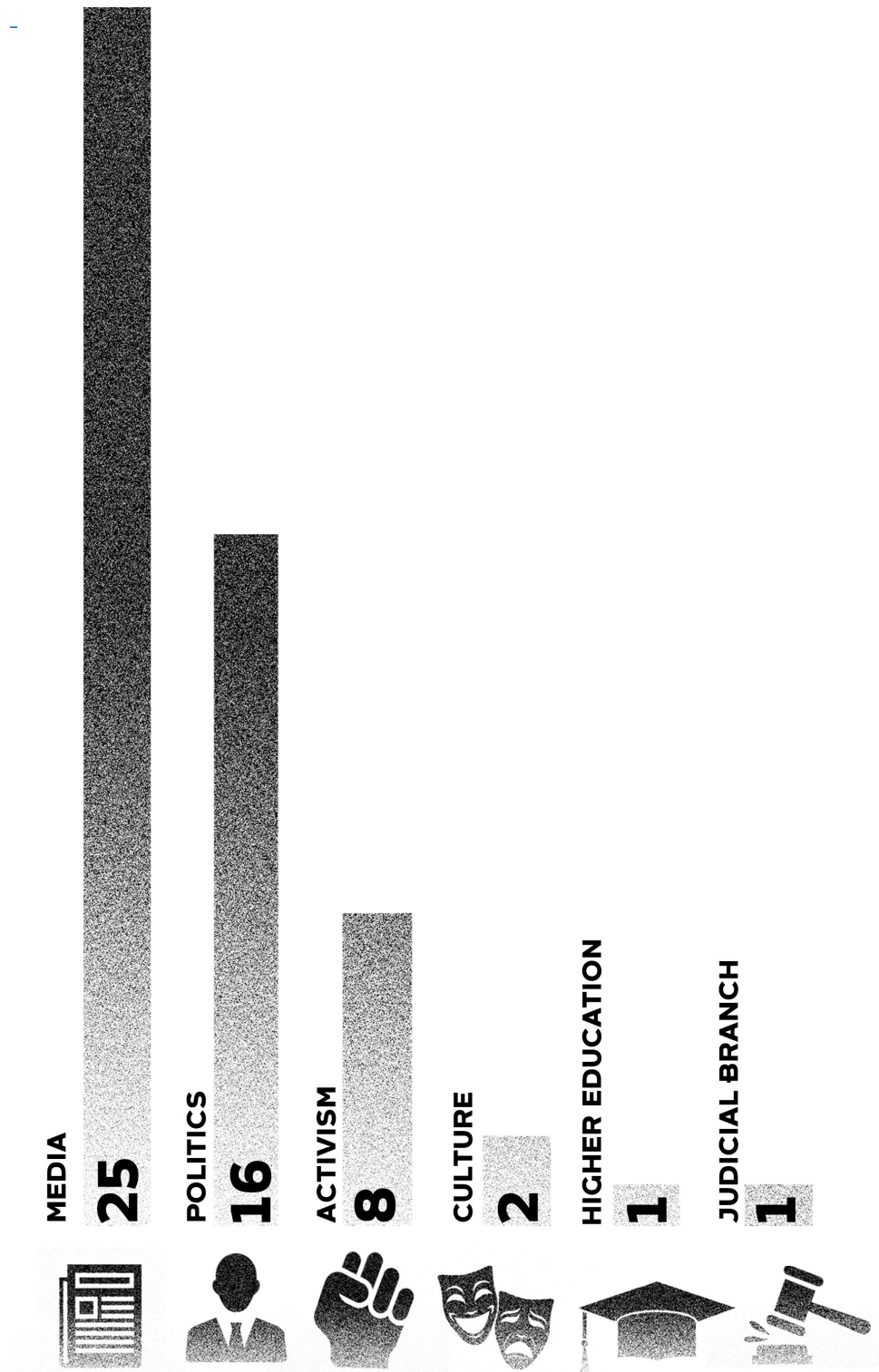
Denials

In 2023, there is a noticeable trend in Serbian media, where less emphasis is placed on the historical context of the 1990s, during which frequent attacks and hate speech targeted Albanian residents of Kosovo. The current political climate has also contributed to reduced discussion of the Srebrenica genocide among prominent figures in Serbia. The authorities in Belgrade have been primarily focused on ongoing protests in the capital and the unresolved issues between Belgrade and Pristina. For instance, as compared to eight recorded instances of denial during the previous reporting period, President Aleksandar Vučić of Serbia only denied the genocide once this year, acknowledging that a crime was committed in Srebrenica but not its classification as genocide. The accompanying graphs and statistics clearly demonstrate that Serbian tabloids play a significant role in spreading messages of genocide denial.

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Politicians in the Republika Srpska entity of Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be the most prominent deniers of the Srebrenica genocide in 2023, most often utilizing public-state media based in Banja Luka as a platform. Additionally, researchers also actively participate in the denial of genocide, with their commitment to this practice remaining consistent despite political changes or regional circumstances.



A notable addition to the list of genocide deniers is Zoran Milanović, the President of the Republic of Croatia. According to the 2023 data, Milanović is increasingly involved in this practice, marking a significant change compared to previous reports. His emergence as a genocide denier is significant given his high political office and level of influence as the President of Croatia.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE: TRIALS AND VERDICTS

Since its establishment in 1993, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and its successor, the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (IRMCT), have indicted over 160 people for war crimes and genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina. More than 90 of these individuals were convicted, seven of whom received life sentences. Additionally, numerous indictments were referred to the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina for further proceedings.

Through the prosecution of war crimes committed in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Tribunal has made enormous contributions to the fight for justice as well as set crucial legal precedents. These precedents are a formidable tool in combating the denial of genocide and other war crimes, not just for BiH but for the entire world.

Final Verdict against Jovica Stanišić and Franko Simatović²⁴

On May 31st, 2023, the Appeals Chamber of the IRMCT issued its final verdict in the case against Jovica Stanišić and Franko Simatović, two former high-ranking members of the Serbian State Security Service. In this landmark ruling, both men were found guilty of widespread war crimes across BiH and of participating in a joint criminal enterprise to cleanse the territory of its non-Serb population. The decision, which officially established the direct involvement of Serbian State Security in the war in BiH, marked a significant milestone as the Hague Tribunal's first-ever conviction of a Serbian official for their complicity in the war.

The proceedings against Stanišić and Simatović began following their arrest in 2003 and became one of the longest trials at The Hague. They were initially acquitted in 2013 but were ordered to be retried in 2015. The new trial began in 2017, with the prosecution charging them with various crimes, including murder, deportation, forcible transfer, and persecution. The first-instance verdict was issued in 2021, by which Stanišić and Simatović were sentenced to 12 years in prison each for participating in the crimes committed in Bosanski Šamac in BiH but acquitted of other crimes.

24 IRMCT, Prosecutor v. Jovica Stanišić and Franko Simatović, MICT-15-96-A, Appeals Chamber, Judgment, May 31, 2023, https://www.irmct.org/sites/default/files/case_documents/IRMCT-Appeal-Judgment-Stanistic-Simatovic-ENG.pdf.

In the final verdict, the Appellate Council of the IRMCT partially accepted the appeal of the Prosecutor's Office, overturning their previous acquittals. The sentence imposed on Stanišić and Simatović was thus extended from 12 to 15 years to account for crimes committed in multiple municipalities, including Bijeljina, Zvornik, Bosanski Šamac, Doboj, Sanski Most, and Trnovo.

The Appellate Panel also determined that Stanišić and Simatović were responsible as members of a joint criminal enterprise for the crimes committed by Serb forces during 1992 and 1995. Fellow participants in this enterprise included the likes of Slobodan Milošević, Radmilo Bogdanović, Mihalj Kertes, Milan Martić, Milan Babić, Goran Hadžić, Radovan Karadžić, Ratko Mladić, Momčilo Krajišnik, Biljana Plavšić, and Željko Ražnatović.

Regarding the crimes in Bosanski Šamac and Sanski Most, the Appellate Council held Stanišić and Simatović directly responsible for providing assistance to the perpetrators. As for the municipalities of Bijeljina, Zvornik, Doboj, and Trnovo, the Appellate Panel concluded that these crimes could be attributed to Stanišić and Simatović through the actions of other members of the joint criminal enterprise.

The final judgment includes information related to the execution of six Bosniak boys and men near Trnovo who were captured after the fall of Srebrenica in July 1995. The court established beyond a reasonable doubt that the Scorpions paramilitary unit, under the command of Slobodan Medić, command of killed the six Muslim men and boys in the rural town of Godinjska Bara.

The Case of Miomir Jasikovac

On November 23rd, 2022, the Prosecutor's Office of BiH filed an indictment against Miomir Jasikovac, the former commander of the Military Police Company of the VRS Zvornik Brigade. According to the indictment, which was confirmed by the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina on December 20th, 2022, Jasikovac was accused of knowingly participating in the July 1995 Srebrenica genocide and assisting the members of the joint criminal enterprise to eliminate the Bosniak population of the enclave through forced relocation and execution. Specifically, the indictment alleges that Jasikovac participated in the detention, transportation, and execution of prisoners at the locations of the Orahovac school, where more than 800 victims were killed, the Petkovci Dam, where more than 700 victims were killed, and the Kozluk gravel pit, where more than 800 victims were killed.²⁵

²⁵ Prosecutor's Office of Bosnia and Herzegovina, "INDICTMENT ISSUED FOR THE CRIMINAL OFFENSE OF GENOCIDE," November 24, 2022, <https://www.tuzilastvobih.gov.ba/?id=5439&jezik=e>.

However, at the time of the indictment, Jasikovac was beyond the reach of BiH judicial authorities, as he resides in Novi Sad and holds Serbian citizenship.

On December 5th, 2022, the Serbian Prosecutor's Office for War Crimes filed an indictment against Jasikovac, identified under the pseudonym "AA," alleging that he and his subordinates "... participated in the detention of members of the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina and male civilians, whom they escorted to the locations knowing that they would then be killed." However, this indictment acknowledges the deaths of only around 300 people as connected to these activities.²⁶

On January 13th, 2023, the Prosecutor's Office for War Crimes of the Republic of Serbia reached a plea agreement with Jasikovac, according to which he received the minimum prison sentence of five years upon pleading guilty. With this plea agreement, the Serbian Prosecutor's Office effectively prevented the Prosecutor's Office of BiH from proceeding with its indictment, which charged Jasikovac with genocide and the murder of approximately 2,400 people. By closing the case with a sentence of five years in prison, Serbia significantly reduced the number of recognized victims and avoided any mention of the Srebrenica genocide.

The Case of Momčilo Tešić

On September 7th, 2022, the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina delivered a first-instance verdict in the case of Momčilo Tešić, sentencing him to 20 years in prison for crimes against humanity. As a member of the Military Police platoon of the Vlasenica Brigade, Tešić, was found guilty of knowingly participating in the Bosnian Serb attack on Srebrenica between July 6th and July 19th, 1995, thereby persecuting the Bosniak civilian population on political, national, cultural, ethnic, and religious grounds, resulting in multiple murders.²⁷

The indictment initially accused Tešić of aiding in the genocide, however, the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina ultimately convicted him of a crime against humanity. Specifically, Tešić was found guilty of his involvement in the shooting of 17 men from the Srebrenica area on July 13th and in the municipality of Vlasenica.²⁸

26 Jovana Kolari, "Genocid pod pseudonimom [Genocide under a Pseudonym]," *Peščanik*, April 4, 2023, <https://pescanik.net/genocid-pod-pseudonimom/>.

27 Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Case S1 1 K 027404 18, Momčilo Tešić, <https://sudbih.gov.ba/Court/Case/1178>.

28 Marija Taušan, "Momčilo Tešić osuđen na 20 godina zatvora za zločine nad Srebreničanima [Momčilo Tešić sentenced to 20 years in prison for crimes against the people of Srebrenica]," *Detektor*, September 7, 2022, <https://detektor.ba/2022/09/07/momcilo-tesic-osudjen-na-20-godina-zatvora-za-zlocine-nad-srebrenicani/>.

In June 2023, following an appeal against the first-instance verdict, the Appellate Panel of the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina reduced Momčilo Tešić's sentence by two years, resulting in a final sentence of 18 years in prison.

Alongside Tešić, Mile Kosorić, Borislav Stojišić, and Rajko Drakulić were also indicted in late 2017. However, in May 2022, the Trial Chamber separated Kosorić's proceedings due to his health condition, while Borislav Stojišić and Rajko Drakulić remain fugitives, with standing international warrants for their arrest.²⁹

The Kravica Case

In late 2016, the trial commenced at the Special Court in Belgrade for the killing of 1,300 Bosniaks in the village of Kravica, near Srebrenica, in July 1995. The accused in this case were eight members of the Special Brigade of the RS Interior Ministry, namely Nedeljko Milidragović, Aleksa Golijanin, Milivoje Batinica, Dragomir Parović, Aleksandar Dačević, Boro Miletić, Jovan Petrović, and Vidoslav Vasić.

As Belgrade does not officially recognize that genocide was committed in Srebrenica, the indictments in Serbia pertaining to Srebrenica do not use this terminology. Thus, the classification of genocide was absent from the Kravica proceedings initiated in late 2016.³⁰

Due to numerous postponements and continuations, the trial had to start afresh after nearly eight years. The trial resumed before the Special Court in Belgrade in June 2023, prompted by a change in one of the members of the court panel.³¹

The Case of Miodrag Josipović et. al

In late November 2021, after six years of evidentiary proceedings, the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina issued a first-instance verdict in the case against Miodrag Josipović, Branimir Tešić, Dragomir Vasić, Danilo Zoljić, and Radomir Pantić.³² The accused were acquitted of their alleged participation in the partial extermination of the Bosniak population in Eastern Bosnia, to include crimes such as forcible transport, detention, and execution of civilians.

²⁹ Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Case S1 1 K 027404 18.

³⁰ "Nakon 7 godina, ponovo počelo suđenje za ubistvo 1.313 Bošnjaka u Kravici [After 7 Years, the Trial for the Murder of 1,313 Bosniaks in Kravica Began Again]," *Federalna*, June 13, 2023, <https://www.federalna.ba/nakon-7-godina-ponovo-pocelo-sudjenje-za-ubistvo-1313-bosnjackih-civila-u-kravici-scmfx>.

³¹ Dejan Kožul, "Suđenje za Srebrenicu opet na nuli [Trial for Srebrenica Again at Zero]," *Novosti*, June 25, 2023, <https://www.portalnovosti.com/sudjenje-za-srebrenicu-opet-na-nuli>.

³² Miodrag Josipović was the head of the Public Security Station in Bratunac, Branimir Tešić was the deputy commander of the Police Station in Bratunac, Dragomir Vasić was the head of the Zvornik Public Security Center, Danilo Zoljić was the commander of the Special Police Units, and Radomir Pantić was the former commander of that unit's First Company.

The first-instance verdict stated that the Prosecutor's Office of BiH "did not prove beyond reasonable doubt the participation of the accused in the actions described in the individual points of the indictment, and in particular did not prove the existence of a subjective element among the accused, i.e. the existence of an intention to fully or partially the destruction of the protected group of the Bosniak population."³³

On April 13th, 2022, the Council of the Appellate Division of the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina issued its second-instance verdict in the case, affirming the earlier first-instance verdict from November 2021, and rejecting the appeal filed by the BiH Prosecutor's Office as unfounded.³⁴

33 Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, "Trial Judgment in Miodrag Josipović et al. Delivered," November 11, 2021, <https://sudbih.gov.ba/Post/Read/Objavljena%20prvostepena%20presuda%20u%20predmetu%20Miodrag%20Josipovi%C4%87%20i%20drugi>.

34 Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, "Second-instance judgment in Miodrag Josipović et al.," August 24, 2022, <https://sudbih.gov.ba/Post/Read/Drugostepena%20presuda%20u%20predmetu%20Miodrag%20Josipovi%C4%87%20i%20dr>.

FAILURE TO PROSECUTE GENOCIDE DENIAL IN BIH

On July 23rd, 2021, Valentin Inzko, then the High Representative in BiH, exercised the Bonn powers to amend the Criminal Code of Bosnia and Herzegovina to explicitly prohibit and impose penalties for the denial of genocide and the glorification of war criminals. The law, which officially came into effect on July 28th, 2021, stipulates:

Whoever publicly condones, denies, grossly trivializes or tries to justify a crime of genocide, crimes against humanity or a war crime established by a final adjudication pursuant to the Charter of the International Military Tribunal appended to the London Agreement of 8 August 1945 or by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia or the International Criminal Court or a court in Bosnia and Herzegovina, directed against a group of persons or a member of such a group defined by reference to race, colour, religion, descent or national or ethnic origin, when the conduct is carried out in a manner likely to incite to violence or hatred against such a group or a member of such a group, shall be punished by imprisonment for a term between six months and five years.³⁵

The publication of the High Representative's decision provoked many iterations of genocide denial, including from Milorad Dodik, a member of the BiH Presidency at that time, Banja Luka Mayor Draško Stanivuković, Jelena Trivić, a member of the RS National Assembly, Srebrenica Mayor Mladen Grujičić.³⁶

In response to the amendments, the BiH Prosecutor's Office announced the opening of a case to monitor and record all declarations made by individuals or groups expressing views denying genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes since the law's entry into force.³⁷

As of May 2023, the end of this reporting period, no indictments have been filed for genocide denial. While all submitted applications have been assigned to prosecutors, Chief Prosecutor of BiH Milanko Kajganić stated on February 23rd, 2023, that no indictments have been made thus far due to difficulties encountered by prosecutors in proving the existence of a criminal offense.³⁸

35 High Representative's Decision on Enacting the Law on the Amendment to the Criminal Code of Bosnia and Herzegovina, OHR, No. 26/21, July 23, 2021, <http://www.ohr.int/hrs-decision-on-enacting-the-law-on-amendment-to-the-criminal-code-of-bosnia-and-herzegovina/>.

36 See: Adem Mehmedović et. al. "Srebrenica Genocide Denial Report 2022," 45-47.

37 Prosecutor's Office of Bosnia and Herzegovina, "FOLLOWING THE DECISION OF THE HIGH REPRESENTATIVE, A CASE WILL BE FORMED IN THE PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE OF BIH," July 23, 2021, <https://www.tuzilastvobih.gov.ba/?id=4988&jezik=e>.

38 M. Ma., "Kajganić: Za negiranje genocida nije podignuta nijedna optužnica, teško je dokazati postojanje krivičnog djela [Kajganić: No Indictment has been Filed for Genocide Denial, it's Difficult to Prove the Existence of a Criminal Offense]," *Faktor*, February 23, 2023, <https://faktor.ba/vijest/kajganic-za-negiranje-genocida-nije-podignuta-nijedna-optuznica-tesko-je-dokazati-postojanje-krivicnog-djela/191111>.

In fact, by the end of 2022, the BiH Prosecutor's Office had issued 27 orders *not* to carry out investigations into criminal charges for denying genocide. In eight cases, the Prosecutor's Office issued an order not to conduct an investigation due to a lack of evidence, in 11 cases because there was no doubt that a criminal offense had been committed, and in six cases "due to the existence of other circumstances that exclude criminal prosecution." In one case, the Prosecutor's Office issued an order not to conduct an investigation because it is about the diplomatic immunity of the reported person. In two cases, an appeal was filed and no final decision was made.³⁹

The practice of the Prosecutor's Office of Bosnia and Herzegovina not to bring charges against reports of denial of genocide continued in 2023. From January to the end of May 2023, the Prosecutor's Office issued nine orders to refrain from conducting investigations. In a media statement on May 9th, 2023, Kajganić stated:

The provision is really broad because it is not enough for someone to say that something did not happen and that it constitutes a criminal act. The prosecutor must prove that such a denial could have led to a certain consequence.⁴⁰

From July 28, 2021, until the end of May 2023, the Prosecutor's Office of Bosnia and Herzegovina has thus issued a total of 36 orders not to conduct investigations into criminal charges for denial of genocide.

Milorad Dodik

From the official criminalization of denial on July 28th, 2021, until the end of May 2023, Milorad Dodik has been the leading denier of genocide, making clear in an early statement that he would rather "go to prison than admit something that did not happen."⁴¹

"Genocide did not happen there [in Srebrenica], we all know that here in the Republika Srpska," Dodik said at a press conference in Banja Luka on February 21, 2023.⁴²

39 Lejla Gačanica, "Analiza pravosnažnih naredbi o nesprovođenju istraga Tužilaštva Bosne i Hercegovine [Analysis of Legally Binding Orders of Non-Conduct of Investigations by the Prosecutor's Office of Bosnia and Herzegovina]" PDF, n.d., p. 1, <https://detektor.ba/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/ANALI-ZA-I-Pravosnaznih-naredbi-o-nesprovođenju-istraga-Tuzilastva-Bosne-i-Hercegovine-Lejla-Gacanica.pdf>.

40 S. M., "Zašto Tužilaštvo BiH ignoriše Inzkov zakon o negiranju genocida i ratnih zločina? [Why is the Prosecutor's Office of BiH Ignoring Inzko's Law on Genocide and War Crimes Denial?]," *Oslobođenje*, May 9, 2023, <https://okanal.oslobodjenje.ba/okanal/vijesti/zasto-tuzilastvo-bih-ignorise-inzkov-zakon-o-neg-iranju-genocida-i-ratnih-zlocina-857439>.

41 "Dodik opet negirao genocid u Srebrenici i izrazio spremnost da robija [Dodik again Denies the Srebrenica Genocide and Expresses his Willingness to go to Prison]," *Al Jazeera Balkans*, August 12, 2021, <https://balkans.aljazeera.net/news/balkan/2021/8/12/dodik-apsolutno-bih-prije-isao-u-zatvor-nego-priznao-da-se-u-srebrenici-desio-genocid>.

42 "Dodik negirao genocid u Srebrenici [Dodik Denied the Genocide in Srebrenica]," *Radio Slobodna Evropa*, February 21, 2023, <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/dodik-genocid-srebrenica-potocari-republika-srpska/32281453.html>.

Several criminal charges have been filed against Dodik for denying the genocide, including by representatives of survivors' associations, BiH Parliament Member Zlatko Miletić, and the Institute for Genocide Research Canada. On March 6th, 2023, the Prosecutor's Office of Bosnia and Herzegovina opened a case against him for denying the Srebrenica genocide.

In early April of 2023, the Prosecutor's Office announced that it was working on several cases in which Dodik was accused or suspected of denial, in relation to the recent amendments to the Criminal Code of BiH.⁴³

That month alone, Dodik engaged in genocide denial on four separate occasions, stating on April 5th, "What genocide? There is no such thing as genocide."⁴⁴

On April 7th, after High Representative Christian Schmidt's call for Dodik to be tried for genocide denial, Dodik claimed that "Serbs did not commit genocide, and if there was genocide anywhere, it was against Serbs." He went on to say on this occasion, "If they think that in this way they will impose a ban on us by silence, I will only warn them that in the former Yugoslavia there were many taboos that were defended by the communists, and that country fell apart. I live for the day when this one, BIH, will fall apart too."⁴⁵

A few days later, on April 11th, Dodik asserted, "There was no genocide in Srebrenica, and we do not accept this qualification. Please prosecute Milorad Dodik, I'm ready to appear in any of your courts and present an argument as to why it [the events in Srebrenica in July 1995] was not genocide."⁴⁶

During the commemoration in Jasenovac, Dodik relativized the genocide, claiming that "the crime in Srebrenica cannot be equated with Jasenovac," and emphasizing that "representatives of Western countries will not say that genocide was committed in Jasenovac against Serbs, but that they are willing to use everything they can, from NATO bombs and everything they have, to justify the crimes that they committed in this region in the 1990s, breaking up Yugoslavia."⁴⁷

43 "Tužilaštvo BiH: Formirano više predmeta protiv Dodika zbog negiranja genocida [Prosecution of BiH: Formed Several Cases against Dodik for Denying the Genocide]," *N1*, April 10, 2023, <https://n1info.ba/vijesti/tuzilastvo-bih-formirano-vise-predmeta-protiv-dodika-zbog-negiranja-genocida/>.

44 A. O., "Dodik Izetbegovića nazvao kretenom i ponovo negirao genocide [Dodik Called Izetbegović a Jerk and again Denied the Genocide]," *Source*, April 5, 2023, <https://source.ba/clanak/BiH/640173/Dodik-Izetbegovica-nazvao-kretenom-i-ponovo-negirao-genocid>.

45 "Dodik: Srbi nisu počinili genocid [Dodik: Serbs did Not Commit Genocide]," *Glas Srpske*, Arpil 7, 2023, https://www.glassrpske.com/lat/novosti/vijesti_dana/dodik-srbi-nisu-pocinili-genocid/464264.

46 "Dodik spreman iznijeti argumentaciju da nije bilo genocida u Srebrenici [Dodik Ready to Present the Argument that there was No Genocide in Srebrenica]," *Argumenti*, April 11, 2023, <https://www.argumenti.rs/dodik-spreman-iznijeti-argumentaciju-da-nije-bilo-genocida-u-srebrenici/>.

47 "Dodik: Jasenovačka tišina sastavni dio duše srpskog Naroda [Dodik: The Silence of Jasenovac is an Integral Part of the Soul of the Serbian People]," *RTV KD*, April 23, 2023, <https://www.rtv-kd.com/dodik->

He later repeated, “that there was no genocide in Srebrenica, but a crime for which those who committed them were individually responsible and should be responsible.”⁴⁸

Radovan Kovačević

On September 6th, 2021, Radovan Kovačević, an advisor to the member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, made the following statement on the state television show Plenum:

We believe that the qualification is politically motivated and that is something that is absolutely unacceptable for us. Here, I’m ready to say it now... I believe that it is a political qualification... I fully respect and sincerely regret all the victims of the crime that happened in Srebrenica, but I clearly and responsibly claim that genocide did not happen in Srebrenica, that the crime that happened in Srebrenica cannot be qualified as genocide, because in no way it can be compared with the crimes of genocide that happened against the Serbian people in the NDH [Independent State of Croatia], as happened in Jasenovac, Jadovno and in many other places. It cannot be compared with the crime of genocide, that is, the Holocaust against the Jewish people, nor with the genocide that...Turkey carried out against the Armenians.⁴⁹

Two reports were subsequently filed against Kovačević, one anonymously, and the other by the Federal Police Administration official Ibro Bešlija. On both occasions, the acting prosecutor in the case issued orders not to conduct an investigation.⁵⁰

jasenovacka-tisina-sastavni-dio-duse-srpskog-naroda/.

48 Ibid.

49 “Tužilaštvo BiH neće provoditi istragu protiv Dodikovog savjetnika zbog negiranja genocida: Kovačević: ‘U Srebrenici nije bio genocid’; državni tužilac: ‘Kovačević nije imao namjeru da povrijedi tuđa osjećanja!’ [The BiH Prosecutor’s Office will not Investigate Dodik’s Advisor for Genocide Denial: Kovačević: ‘There was no genocide in Srebrenica,’ State Prosecutor: ‘Kovačević had no intention of hurting other people’s feelings!’],” *Istraga*, July 13, 2022, <https://istraga.ba/tuzilastvo-bih-neze-provoditi-istragu-protiv-dodikovog-savjetnika-zbog-negiranja-genocida-kovacevic-u-srebrenici-nije-bio-genocid-drzavni-tuzilac-kovacevic-nije-imao-namjeru-da-povrijedi-tud/>.

50 “Obustavljena istraga protiv Dodikovog savjetnika za negiranje genocida [Suspended investigation against Dodik’s adviser for genocide denial],” *Radio Slobodna Evropa*, July 14, 2022, <https://ba.voanews.com/a/obustavljena-istraga-protiv-dodikovog-savjetnika-za-negiranje-genocida/6658487.html>.

CASE STUDY: INSTITUTIONAL GENOCIDE DENIAL

The institutional background of the war crimes and genocide committed in Srebrenica and Bosnia and Herzegovina has been extensively documented and recognized at both domestic and international judicial levels. Beyond furnishing the judicially-established truth of the events of the war, this process has provided a consistent understanding of the chronological and sociopolitical nature of the military operations that took place in BiH during the 1990s, with the institutional and personal involvement of the VRS under the command of Ratko Mladić. Along with the court rulings about the Bosniak genocide in Srebrenica, the intervening decades have seen numerous studies, academic monographs, and symposia conducted by scholars from various fields of research in BiH, Europe, and around the world. These scholarly works serve as enduring testimonies to the experiences of Srebrenica during the 1990s. Owing to the wide range of arguments and evidence collected on this subject, the truth about the Srebrenica genocide has been internationally recognized.

However, despite the overwhelming evidence and factual basis, which includes the testimonies of genocide survivors, institutional denial persists among high-ranking officials and government bodies in Serbia and the RS entity. This denial remains an obstacle to the processes of addressing the past and the establishing a consensus based on the truth established by the courts. Ultimately, this practice impedes cooperation in various sectors necessary for peacebuilding, even 28 years after the genocide. It likewise prevents survivors from feeling safe within an environment where their own experiences are politically and institutionally negated, despite all available facts and evidence.

Active Genocide Denial by High-Level RS Officials

On both domestic and international levels, Milorad Dodik has represented the institutions of the RS entity for years, positioning himself as an ideological successor to Radovan Karadžić, Biljana Plavšić, and others. Throughout the period covered by this Report, Dodik has continued to engage in genocide denial, a practice which took on even greater significance following his election to the RS Presidency during the 2022 general elections in BiH. This victory, achieved with the support of the majority of voters in the constituency, reinforces assertions that a connection exists between individuals and institutions, particularly as concerns the articulation of personal, political, and institutional interests.

For Dodik, active denial of the Srebrenica genocide has become his primary means of negation. For example, on February 21st, 2023, Dodik directly denied the occurrence of genocide, proclaiming,

“Genocide did not happen there, and everyone knows that.” He went on to add that, “according to what the definition of genocide is, and what was the whole team and determined that there was no genocide there.”⁵¹

In his speeches, Dodik often refers to such ‘alternative authorities,’ as well as literature employing pseudo-scholarly pretensions to deny and distort genocide. During an event in Belgrade,⁵² along with emphasizing the need for a bolder step toward the unification of the Serb people in the region as the only solution to the Serbian question, Dodik declared “If someone thinks it was genocide, I don’t have to accept that. I have other authorities that I refer to. I have listened to some who know everything about it and who are unquestioned global authorities.”

Serbian Support for Genocide Denial

While Milorad Dodik actively denies the Srebrenica genocide, employing claims that contradict established facts and promoting alternative historical narratives and conspiracy theories, the President of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić, demonstrates greater caution in his public statements about Srebrenica and the genocide victims. However, despite his rhetorical restraint, Vučić has not explicitly distanced himself from Dodik’s denials, nor has he actively supported measures to prohibit genocide denial or the promotion of alternative historical narratives, such as the February 2022 event “Serbia that Defends itself in Serbia.”

President Aleksandar Vučić has been primarily occupied with events in northern Kosovo, which has contributed to his diminished commentary on the socio-political circumstances in BiH. However, in July 2022, he mentioned not visiting Srebrenica on July 11th because he felt “unwelcome.” He added, “Whatever I would say, I would be exposed to the most brutal attacks because I did not want to say the magic word they want to hear.”⁵³ This statement by the Serbian President continues to challenge the characterization of the mass executions in Srebrenica as genocide.

51 “Dodik: Najbolje bi bilo da Šmit ode, i za njega i za zemlju koja ga je poslala [Dodik: It would be Best if Schmidt Left, both for him and for the Country that Sent him],” *RTRS*, February 21, 2023, <https://lat.rtrs.tv/vijesti/vijest.php?id=503880>.

52 The event held in Belgrade is a public forum called “Serbia is defending itself in Serbia as well,” and it was organized by the Representation of the RS in Serbia and the informative and political portals “All about Srpska” and “Fakti”. The forum was organized on the occasion of January 9 - Republika Srpska Day, which was declared unconstitutional by the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Despite this, the authorities of the Republika Srpska entity headed by Milorad Dodik celebrate this day as the Day of the RS without sanctions.

53 “Vučić: Nisam otišao u Srebrenicu zato što nisam dobrodošao [Vučić: I didn’t go to Srebrenica because I was Not Welcome],” *RTRS*, July 13, 2022, <https://lat.rtrs.tv/vijesti/vijest.php?id=479937&fbclid=IwAR3kLg23AlCR9hz7i2dYWMmzEVRNM1fbfzDMLJymYKEiGqIPkujAwtrfQFc>.

Institutional support for genocide denial also manifests in financial assistance provided to organizations, institutes, and associations that propagate narratives contradicting the court-established facts. Previous media reports have highlighted significant financial contributions received by the regional Serb Alliance from the Serbian state budget.⁵⁴ Miroslav Linta, the President of this Alliance and a long-time representative of the Serbian Progressive Party, has repeatedly denied the Srebrenica genocide. On the 27th anniversary of the genocide, for example, Linta called for a research institute to be established, with one of its tasks being to “argumentatively demonstrate that genocide against Bosniaks did not take place in Srebrenica in 1995.”⁵⁵

54 Jovana Tomić, “Za novine poslanika SNS-a milioni dinara iz budžeta [Millions of Dinars from the Budget for the Newspapers of SNS Deputies],” *Center for Investigative Journalism of Serbia*, May 20, 2020, <https://www.cins.rs/za-novine-poslanika-sns-a-milioni-dinara-iz-budzeta/>.

55 “Linta: Osnovati institut za zadatakom da pokaže da u Srebrenici nije bio genocid [Linta: Establish an Institute with the Task of Showing that there was No Genocide in Srebrenica],” *RTRS*, July 11, 2022, <https://lat.rtrs.tv/vijesti/vijest.php?id=479708>.

CASE STUDY: GENOCIDE DENIAL IN THE MEDIA

The media landscape in Serbia and the Republika Srpska is plagued by disinformation and political manipulation, with serious consequences for public awareness. In an environment where independent agencies and journalists are often characterized as “hostile” or “foreign” elements, media outlets under the control and influence of ruling structures have done substantial harm in their efforts to shape the views of the Serb populations in BiH and Serbia. This is especially apparent as concerns public perceptions of truth, freedom, human rights, and other democratic values. Of particular concern is the strategically devised media discourse surrounding the 1990s war and the verdicts of the Hague Tribunal, especially those related to war crimes against the non-Serb population, including the genocide of Bosniaks in Srebrenica. This discourse is characterized by the persistent denial of the Srebrenica genocide and the uncritical dissemination of distorting and negationist statements by government officials and analysts. This carries potential long-term consequences, such as the isolation of the public from accurate information and the creation of a disinformation space that political elites may exploit to manipulate the public and spread discriminatory and hateful ideologies. Research on media discourse on the Srebrenica genocide in Serbia and the RS also indicates the strong influence of media outlets financed by the Russian Federation, such as *Sputnik* or *Russia Today*. Publishing in the local language, these platforms promote denial of the Srebrenica genocide, pro-Russian propaganda, anti-Western sentiment, and false information about the causes and development of the war in Ukraine.

Tabloids

Tabloids in Serbia play a significant role in propagating genocide denial and “alternative history.” Research and content analysis, as well as the style of Serbian tabloid articles themselves, indicate a level unprofessionalism, arbitrariness, and factual inaccuracy that has a detrimental effect on already grim everyday life. In terms of denying and distorting the Srebrenica genocide, media outlets at the forefront of this campaign include *SRNA*, *Informer*, *Alo*, *Novosti*, *RTRS*, *IN4S*, *Politika*, *Sputnik*, and *Republika (Srpski Telegraf)*.

In June 2022, the tabloid *Informer* published an article referencing “the alleged genocide in Srebrenica,” in connection to BiH director Jasmila Žbanić’s film “*Quo Vadis Aida*,” which it characterized as “anti-Serb.”⁵⁶ Similarly, the tabloid *Alo* also commented on “Quo

56 “LUDILO MOZGA! Bosanska rediteljka Jasmila Žbanić izmišlja da je Vučić zabranio RTS da emituje ‘Kvo vadis, Aida’!? [MADNESS OF THE BRAIN! Bosnian director Jasmila Žbanić invents that Vučić banned RTS from broadcasting ‘Kvo vadis, Aida’!?],” *Informer*; June 13, 2022, <https://informer.rs/vesti/politi->

Vadis Aida” in a text published on the 27th anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide, characterizing it as a “a film in which the Serbs are portrayed as a genocidal nation.”⁵⁷ This same tabloid also referred to the judicially confirmed genocide in Srebrenica as “alleged” while reporting on an initiative to condemn the genocide. The tabloid targeted Sven Alkalaj, the permanent representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the UN and insinuated that the initiative was driven solely by Bosniak interests.⁵⁸

ka/711407/ludilo-mozga-bosanska-rediteljka-jasmila-zbanic-izmislja-da-je-vucic-zabranio-rts-da-emituje-kvo-vadis-aida.

57 “HRT EMITUJE ANTISRPSKI FILM ‘Quo Vadis Aida’ na dan sećanja na žrtve ‘genocida’ u Srebrenici [HRT BROADCASTS THE ANTI-SERB FILM ‘Quo Vadis Aida’ on the day of remembrance of the victims of the ‘genocide’ in Srebrenica],” *Alo*, July 11, 2022, https://www.alo.rs/vesti/drustvo/650116/hrvati-emituju-antisrpski-film-na-dan-secanja-na-zrtve-zlocina-u-srebrenici/vest?fbclid=IwAR2vnVLIybCsWip5keIhC-1TA3s8Sf_PuEkTq-GGwFpm9aBGe9C4uNINQXs8.

58 “PRLJAVA STRATEGIJA Predstavnik BiH Sven Alkalaj u Njujorku spremio sramnu rezoluciju: Srbima bi da stave žig genocidnog naroda! [DIRTY STRATEGY BiH Representative Sven Alkalaj Prepared a Shame-

Public Broadcasting

The public broadcasting network in the RS entity of BiH, RTRS, continues to play a disturbing role in denying and distorting the Srebrenica genocide, providing a platform for Milorad Dodik and other politically or ideologically aligned public figures to propagate an alternative historical narrative that diverges from established court rulings and scientifically grounded perspectives. Both RTRS and the news agency SRNA serve as breeding grounds for media disinformation concerning the nature of the aggression on Bosnia and Herzegovina, particularly by distorting the role of the military and political leadership in Republika Srpska during that period. RTRS, along with SRNA news agency, is a breeding grounds for disinformation about the 1990s war in BiH, consistently misrepresenting the role of the military and political leadership of the RS from that period. In May 2023, RTRS aired a re-run of a documentary film glorifying the convicted war criminal Ratko Mladić. The documentary featured Mladić's speech about the formation of Republika Srpska and how future generations must defend the entity while vehemently criticizing the legitimacy of the Hague Tribunal.⁵⁹

ful Resolution in New York: Serbs Should be Labeled as a Genocidal People],” *Alo*, June 22, 2022, [https://www.alo.rs/vesti/politika/642953/predstavnik-bih-sven-alkalaj-u-njujorku-spremio-sramnu-rezoluciju/](https://www.alo.rs/vesti/politika/642953/predstavnik-bih-sven-alkalaj-u-njujorku-spremio-sramnu-rezoluciju/vest)vest.

59 D. Be, “Šta rade Tužilaštvo BiH i RAK dok RTRS i danas najsramnije veliča zločinca Ratka Mladića? [What are the BiH Prosecutor’s Office and RAK doing while the RTRS shamelessly glorifies the criminal Ratko Mladić to this day?],” *Klix*, May 10, 2023, <https://archive.ph/qwNHg#selection-1337.0-1348.0>

GENOCIDE DENIAL AND LIFE IN SREBRENICA

It has been 28 years since the genocide against Bosniaks in the UN “Safe Area” of Srebrenica in July 1995. However, the denial and distortion of this event persist within the local community, particularly among association representatives and political officials.

During this reporting period, the mayor of Srebrenica, Mladen Grujičić, made statements on July 12th, 2022, following the collective funeral and commemoration in Potočari, where he denied and attempted to distort the genocide, characterizing it as “the biggest hoax that Bosniaks, with the help of Western countries – that is, their representatives – are trying to impose in order to keep a narrative in the history books which is a notorious lie.” He went on to claim that “the biggest Muslim military cemetery in Europe is in Potočari, and Bosniaks, with the support of the Western part of the so-called ‘international community,’ make a cult out of it. Even though it’s known to be a hoax, they spread it without any shame.”⁶⁰

Branimir Kojić, the President of the Municipal Organization of the Families of Captured and Killed Fighters and Missing Civilians of Srebrenica, also engaged in the denial of the genocide on this occasion. In a statement to *SRNA*, Kojić said that “members of the Muslim 28th Division of the so-called Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina, who broke through the UN protected zone in Srebrenica in full combat formation with infantry weapons, are buried” in the Memorial Center Cemetery, reiterating “only soldiers were buried in Potočari,” and “many of them didn’t die in July 1995 but died much earlier, or died later.”⁶¹

To this he added, “They started a combat march towards Tuzla, killing everything alive that came their way. In that column, there were injuries, exhaustion, quarrels and confrontations, and even self-destructive armed fights in order not to be captured.”⁶²

In an earlier statement to the media on June 14th, 2022, Kojić made the entirely unfounded claim that “anyone who wants to enter the Potočari Memorial Center will only be able to enter with a handwritten signature that genocide took place in Srebrenica.”⁶³ He also engaged in flagrant relativization, stating:

60 “U Potočarima su ukopani pripadnici 28. divizije, a ne civili [Members of the 28th Division are Buried in Potočari but Not Civilians],” *RTRS*, July 12, 2022, https://lat.rtrs.tv/vijesti/vijest.php?id=479806&fbclid=I-wAR0_0aAnWhQhNtHwyRUmY-IV6QAHNnQeBbtC9hV2iRY_dcluBx1s9T3yNNA.

61 Ibid.

62 Ibid.

63 “Ulaz u Potočare samo uz potpis - U Srebrenici se dogodio genocide [Entry to Potočare Only with a Signature: Genocide Occurred in Srebrenica],” *B92*, June 14, 2022, https://www.b92.net/info/vesti/index.php?yyyy=2022&mm=06&dd=14&nav_id=2170818.

Unfortunately, the foundation of Bosniak society's politics rests on the alleged genocide in Srebrenica. We all know what happened there during the war and what the definition of genocide is. During the Second World War, the Serbian people were reminded well what genocide is. And everyone who wants to educate themselves about that term, they can freely go to Jasenovac. Although thousands of Serbs died in Podrinje and monstrous crimes were committed, they are persistently minimized from Sarajevo, and the crimes against Bosniaks are glorified.⁶⁴

On June 22nd, 2022, after the film "Quo Vadis, Aida?" directed by Jasmila Žbanić was screened in The Hague, Kojić made yet another statement denying the genocide:

Bosniak associations visit The Hague, Brammertz welcomes them there, and they're working together all these years on the myth of Srebrenica, while on the other hand, no one from that so-called court wants to meet with us and give us answers to many questions.⁶⁵

The next day, Kojić again denied the genocide, speaking about the possible adoption of a UN resolution on Srebrenica and genocide:

Bosniaks and political Sarajevo, led by the SDA, do not spare money, nor do they shy away from any international scandals in order to succeed in imposing their view of the events in Srebrenica. Their goal is to shut the mouths of all those who speak loudly that it was not genocide by 2025 and the 30th anniversary.⁶⁶

Kojić continued to deny the genocide in 2023. On January 26th, commenting on a statement made by RS Vice Preseident Ćamil Duraković in support of Srebrenica receiving the status of a district, Kojić stated that "all citizens pay taxes so that he gets paid, we don't pay him to minimize our victims or spread the narrative of the alleged genocide."⁶⁷

On February 21st, 2023, High Representative Christian Schmidt amended the Law on the Srebrenica-Potočari Memorial Center

64 Ibid.

65 S. Mišljenović, "HAG PRAVI CIRKUS OD SREBRENICE: Tribunal oslobodio ubice Srba, a sad prikazuje propagandnu 'Aidu' u sudnici [THE HAGUE MAKES A CIRCUS FROM SREBRENICA: The Tribunal Acquitted Serb Killers and Now is Showing the Propaganda 'Aida' in the Courtroom]," *Novosti*, June 22, 2022, <https://vecernjenovosti.ba/65783/vijesti/haski-tribunal-cirkus-od-srebrenice-prikazan-film-quo-vadis-aida-jasmila-zbanic-propaganda-protiv-srba-branimir-kojic-veljko-lazic-naser-oric-zlocin-nad-srbima-najnovije-vijesti/>.

66 S. Mišljenović and M. Stojkanović M, "GURAJU 'GENOCID' U SKUPŠTINU UN: Šta se krije iza nove rezolucije o Srebrenici za koju lobira Sarajevo [THEY PUSH 'GENOCIDE' IN THE UN ASSEMBLY: What is behind the New Resolution on Srebrenica that Sarajevo is Lobbying for]," *Novosti*, June 23, 2022, <https://www.novosti.rs/vesti/politika/1128887/napad-srbe-biserinoj-reziji-kako-rezolucija-genocidu-srebrenici-ponovo-postala-glavna-tema-ist-riveru>.

67 "Kojić: Srebrenica je u Republici Srpskoj i ne može dobiti status distrikta [Kojić: Srebrenica is in the Republika Srpska and Cannot get the Status of District]," *RTRS*, January 26, 2023, <https://lat.rtrs.tv/vijesti/vijest.php?id=501062>

in order to facilitate the work of the Center. The decision made it possible for unused funds originally intended for the burial of genocide victims to be used for other purposes, such as museum exhibitions and research projects. This decision prompted yet another negationist outburst by Kojić:

Schmidt's new law is a continuation of the international community's policy of supporting the myth of Srebrenica as the cite of only one people's suffering. This confirms the fact that they have so much money that they have to redistribute it because they have been paid for years for something they finished a long time ago...⁶⁸

Another prolific force for genocide denial at the local level is the Bratunac-based Eastern Alternative Association and its president Vojin Pavlović. During this reporting period, they continued to deny the genocide as well as to engage in provocative public displays intended as an insult to survivors. Again this year, the association hung a banner in the very center of Bratunac in March, on the occasion of Ratko Mladic's birthday. The banner, which was removed a few hours after being put up, featured images of the convicted war criminal and the message: "Happy Birthday, Be Alive and Healthy."⁶⁹



Source: Twitter/Istraga.ba

68 S. Mišljenović, "ŠMIT GURA SVOJU 'ISTINU' O SREBRENICI: Visoki predstavnik u Bosni i Hercegovini nametnuo izmene Zakona o memorijalnom centru [SCHMIDT PUSHES HIS 'TRUTH' ABOUT SREBRENICA: The High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina Imposed Changes to the Law on the Memorial Center]," *Novosti*, February 22, 2023, https://www.novosti.rs/planeta/region/1206125/smit-gura-svoju-istinu-srebrenici-visoki-predstavnik-bosni-hercegovini-nametnuo-izmene-zakona-memorijalnom-centru?fbclid=IwAR2Raw1alaOTg1kWwk70M1DcgcgJ5QAFh4ZgxN5Z69vdY5aa3FtvIOL_T04

69 "Sramna rođendanska čestitka Ratku Mladiću u centru Bratunca: Postavili su je poznati negatori genocida [Shameful Birthday Greeting to Ratko Mladić in the Center of Bratunac: Put Up by Well-Known Genocide Deniers]," *Klix*, March 10, 2023, <https://www.klix.ba/vijesti/bih/sramna-rodjendanska-cestitka-ratku-mladicu-u-centru-bratunca-postavili-su-je-poznati-negatori-genocida/230310161>.

Another major development in denial at the local level during this reporting period occurred at the Kravica agricultural warehouse where 1,313 Bosniaks were killed on July 13th, 1995. Each year on this date, survivors and victims' relatives visit this and other execution sites to pay tribute to the victims as part of the annual commemoration of the anniversary of the genocide. On July 13, 2022, however, they were forced to lay their flowers outside the fence around this facility, as Serb authorities denied them entrance.

Earlier, in April 2022, the municipality of Bratunac and its former mayor, Srđan Rankić, ordered renovations to begin on the building to erase all evidence of the crimes committed there during the genocide. This initiative was undertaken with the support and investment of the RS government.

ATTACKS ON ACTIVISTS AND MOTHERS OF SREBRENICA

Since the end of the aggression against BiH, associations have been at the forefront of enabling survivors and relatives of victims to participate in uncovering the truth about those who went missing in the July 1995 genocide as well as during the siege of Srebrenica between 1992 and 1995. Over the years, these associations have risen to meet new challenges – from participating in the processes of locating, identifying, and burying remains, to taking on socio-economic issues, including those related to healthcare and the education of children. In the course of their work, they have established connections with missing persons organizations, government organizations, and NGOs from not only the territory of the former Yugoslavia but around the world. They have also worked extensively with investigative and judicial institutions, making an enormous contribution to substantiating the facts of the genocide before the Hague Tribunal. Their activism was equally important in the establishment of the Memorial Center in Potočari and ensuring that the genocide victims would be buried at this location. The numerous awards and formal recognitions they have received both in BiH and abroad testify to their remarkable achievements. It was at the request of the Association of the Mothers of the Srebrenica and Žepa Enclaves, which representatives of the movement submitted in person to the European Parliament in Brussels, that the Srebrenica Resolution was adopted, designating July 11th as an official day of remembrance for the Srebrenica genocide in all EU countries.

Unfortunately, the mothers of Srebrenica have frequently been subjected to various forms of verbal abuse and attacks on their credibility by those who deny or distort the Srebrenica genocide, which has also been the case in recent years.

In November 2022, Croatian President Zoran Milanović directed insults at the Mothers of Srebrenica after they criticized him for denying the Srebrenica genocide at a leadership summit:

I used to think it was a dignified association of the mothers of those killed in Srebrenica. These are now women who are in getting on in years. If there were mothers then, and their sons were soldiers, they are old women who behaved with dignity, and I hope they did not fall into the clutches of unscrupulous utilitarian swindlers from Sarajevo. If they did, I'll be very sorry. But what's the problem? I've never denied the extent of the murder and massacre in Srebrenica, that does not cross my mind. It's like someone denying the Holocaust as such. But legal qualifications, that's something else.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ "Milanović uputio uvrede na račun Majki Srebrenice: 'Mislio sam da je to dostojanstveno udruženje...' [Milanović directed Insults at Srebrenica Mothers: 'I thought it was a dignified association...']" *Tu-*

The Belgrade-based non-governmental organization Women in Black have also been targeted by those who deny the genocide. The organization engages in various activities to raise awareness in Serbia about the Srebrenica genocide, and each year, their representatives attend the annual commemoration for the victims in Potočari.

One day after the 27th anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide, red paint was splattered across the front door of the organization's premises in Belgrade.



Source: Women in Black

Associations of Mothers, Wives and Daughters of Srebrenica are leaders in advocacy and raising awareness about the genocide in Srebrenica, and the attacks on them represent an attempt to cover up the facts about the genocide.

zanski, November 9, 2022, <https://tuzlanski.ba/oko-nas/region/milanovic-uputio-uvrede-na-racun-majki-srebrenice-mislilo-sam-da-je-to-dostojanstveno-udruzenje/>.

The associations comprising the mothers, wives, and daughters of Srebrenica, along with Women in Black, are dedicated to promoting the truth about the Srebrenica genocide in their own countries and beyond. In post-conflict societies, women's organizations play a vital role in peacebuilding, including through their active involvement in prosecuting perpetrators of atrocities, providing support to survivors, raising awareness, and fostering cultures of remembrance. The associations of Srebrenica's women as well as the Women in Black are exemplary examples of this work, and efforts to undermine and intimidate them are brazen efforts to conceal the truth of the Srebrenica genocide.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the persistence of widespread denial of the Srebrenica genocide across the region, it is critical to address this issue with a clear and effective response. This includes presenting all available facts about the Srebrenica genocide in a comprehensive and accessible manner. The pervasiveness of denial not only in online platforms but also in official public discourse necessitates that political leaders in countries where denial is most prevalent – namely, BiH, Serbia, Croatia and Montenegro – as well as the broader international community assume responsibility for establishing an accurate narrative in the public sphere regarding the Srebrenica genocide.

Commemorating the Srebrenica genocide and preserving the memory of the victims are essential for maintaining peace and stability in BiH. These two closely connected processes are crucial in confronting the past, and only after their undertaking can reconciliation be considered. Reconciliation cannot be achieved by disregarding, neglecting, or downplaying the past, nor by diminishing the severity of past atrocities. Building inter-ethnic trust requires a solid foundation of truth, rather than of compromise and negotiation. The facts of the genocide in Srebrenica must not be subject to negotiation, as truth is not negotiable in healthy societies.

Compared to last year's report, our recommendations remain largely unchanged, except for the need for greater involvement of judicial institutions in enforcing laws related to the denial and distortion of genocide and other crimes against humanity. Although the 2021 law prohibiting genocide denial is a significant step forward, the efforts of state, non-governmental, and international institutions are required to reduce and eventually eliminate the denial of the Srebrenica genocide from public discourse.

General Recommendations for Bosnia and Herzegovina:

- Ensure the Prosecution of War Crimes

The fundamental principle guiding the fight against the denial of the Srebrenica genocide is the criminal prosecution of those accountable for this crime. To achieve this goal, domestic and regional courts must remain committed to upholding the rule of law and dispensing justice in an impartial and independent manner.

- Advocate for Educational Reform

Within Bosnia and Herzegovina's education system, there is no comprehensive school program at the state level that addresses the 1995 genocide in Srebrenica. As such, these events must be effectively incorporated into textbooks and scholastic curriculum across the country. With a careful and well-thought-out approach emphasizing evidence-based learning alongside tolerance and democratic values, this reform would contribute to fostering inter-ethnic trust and building a society free from hatred, discrimination, and revisionism. This endeavor should not be limited to domestic leaders but should also involve representatives from the international community and civil society organizations. To this end, educational institutions in BiH are invited to collaborate with the Srebrenica Memorial Center to develop effective models for educating students about the genocide in Srebrenica.

- Protect Activists and Advocates of Truth

Peaceful activism and the promotion of truth must be supported locally and institutionally. Activists are often at the forefront of the fight against genocide denial and their safety must be prioritized. Those who raise their voices against genocide denial often face threats and violence from various groups, individuals, and even law enforcement and government officials. In light of these circumstances, it is necessary for state structures to proactively work to protect these individuals and work with civil society to uphold the values of truth, non-violence, and respect for human rights.

Recommendations for the International Community:

- Refrain from inflammatory rhetoric, inciting inter-ethnic hatred, or denying and glorifying adjudicated war crimes.
- Accept the verdicts of criminal courts and treat victims from all ethnic, national, and religious groups in BiH with dignity.
- Strongly condemn the denial, justification, and glorification of war crimes, including the genocide in Srebrenica.
- Impose and maintain sanctions, such as travel bans and asset freezes, against public officials and those in positions of power in BiH who publicly deny the genocide in Srebrenica or glorify convicted war criminals.
- Insist on the cessation of divisive and hateful rhetoric in the course of BiH's path toward EU integration.
- Raise awareness a global scale about the harmful impacts of the denial of genocide and atrocities and the implications of these practices for BiH and the region.

- Rename public places, legal entities, and events that glorify convicted war crimes and criminals, removing all such features from public space.
- Ensure effective and impartial investigation and prosecution of war crimes.
- Advocate for educational reform that promotes a factual approach to education about the genocide in Srebrenica.
- Support and emphasize the importance of judicial enforcement of the prohibition of denial as proscribed by the amendments to the Criminal Code of BiH (“Inzko’s Law”).

Recommendations for Regional Political Actors:

- Support the peacebuilding and stability in BiH through non-interference in the country’s internal affairs.
- Denounce the denial of judicially established facts and withhold support from public officials in BiH who engage in and promote these practices.
- Refrain from and condemn all forms of historical revisionism, nationalist narratives, inflammatory rhetoric, and political manipulation of the truth.
- Encourage constructive dialogue about the past, including through official visits, youth exchanges, and raising awareness in your own countries.
- Limit or sever normal relations with genocide deniers, thereby isolating them from the wider region and denying them public media platforms to promulgate hatred.

Recommendations for Domestic and International Media:

- Report responsibly and ethically on sensitive topics related to the past, relying on verified facts and respecting the suffering of victims and their families, regardless of ethnic, national, or religious background.
- Use official designations that reflect the true nature and severity of war crimes.
- Refrain from sensational reporting and inflammatory language that may fuel inter-ethnic animosity and division.
- Create media content that showcases positive examples of solidarity and resilience, encourages constructive dialogue, and contributes to regional peacebuilding.
- Work to combat hate speech and false information, particularly on social media networks and online platforms.

Recommendations for Civil Society in Bosnia and Herzegovina:

- Foster collaboration, mutual support, and collective action among institutions and initiatives combatting the denial of genocide and other war crimes.
- Create a public space for respectful dialogue and evidence-based discussion of the past.
- Enhance cooperation with the education system, especially primary and secondary schools.
- Insist on factual accuracy regarding the Srebrenica genocide, consulting with the Srebrenica Memorial Center in the case of any ambiguities regarding specific aspects.

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