

The Relationship of the Republic of Serbia and the Bosnia and Herzegovina Entity Republika Srpska to the United Nations Resolution on the Genocide in Srebrenica

Muamer Džananović¹  ¹ University of Sarajevo, Institute for Research of Crimes Against Humanity and International Law, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Abstract

The adoption of the United Nations General Assembly Resolution on the Genocide in Srebrenica on May 23, 2024, marks a pivotal moment in the international affirmation and protection of the truth about the genocide committed against Bosniaks in Srebrenica in July 1995. This paper explores the significance of the Resolution and critically examines its social, political, and legal implications, particularly in the context of ongoing denial and revisionist policies. It analyzes how the political elites of the Republic of Serbia and the Bosnian-Herzegovinian entity of Republika Srpska—whose political, military, and police structures were found guilty by both the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for their role in the genocide—continue to act in ways that reflect a persistent commitment to genocide denial. The paper demonstrates that their reactions to the Resolution are a continuation of the same large-state political strategies that have historically sought to undermine acknowledgment of the genocide. By linking the Resolution to these ongoing revisionist practices, the study highlights both the challenges and the potential of international recognition as a tool against institutionalized genocide denial.

Keywords

Genocide • Srebrenica • Serbia • Republika Srpska • Historical revisionism



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✉ Corresponding author: Muamer Džananović muamer.dzananovic@institut-genocid.unsa.ba

The Relationship of the Republic of Serbia and the Bosnia and Herzegovina Entity Republika Srpska to the United Nations Resolution on the Genocide in Srebrenica

This paper examines the reactions of the authorities of the Bosnian entity Republika Srpska (RS) and the Republic of Serbia to the United Nations General Assembly Resolution on the Srebrenica Genocide, adopted on 23 May 2024. The Resolution constitutes a key international instrument that affirms and safeguards the truth about the genocide committed against the Bosniaks of Srebrenica in July 1995. Its adoption carries significant political, social, and legal weight, particularly in the context of the persistent denial and revisionist policies that continue to prevail in the region.

The primary aim of this paper is to analyse how the political and institutional structures of RS and the Republic of Serbia—through systemic practices of genocide denial and historical revisionism—respond to this Resolution. These reactions are not isolated political incidents but rather a continuation of a long-term strategy that, from the end of the war to the present, has not abandoned its expansionist statehood objectives. Particular emphasis is placed on how these policies affect justice, reconciliation, and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The subsequent section, entitled *Historical Overview – From the Genocide in Srebrenica to the UN Resolution*, addresses the key events that preceded, accompanied, and culminated in the genocide in Srebrenica in July 1995. It provides a detailed account of the RS Army assault on Srebrenica and surrounding areas, the mass expulsion and concentration of refugees, the designation of Srebrenica as a “safe area” by the United Nations, and the military operations that led to the enclave’s capture and the systematic killing of Bosniaks. This historical context serves as the foundation for understanding subsequent judicial rulings, the international recognition of genocide, and the ongoing practices of its denial by political structures in RS and Serbia.

The section *Denial of Genocide – The Final Stage of Genocide and Genocide denial in Bosnia and Herzegovina* sets out the conceptual framework based on the theory of genocide denial, which, according to Gregory H. Stanton’s model, represents the final stage of the genocidal process. According to this theory, denial is not a separate phenomenon arising only after the crime but rather a continuous and systemic process accompanying it from its inception, persisting for decades after its commission. This theory has been confirmed in the case of the denial of the genocide in Bosnia. Denial encompasses the relativisation of evidence, the creation of alternative historical narratives, the rejection of judicial rulings, and the political instrumentalisation of victims. Through an analysis of the practices of the authorities of the Republic of Serbia and RS regarding the Srebrenica genocide, this paper demonstrates how institutionalised denial persists, representing a fundamental obstacle to confronting the past, achieving justice, and building sustainable peace.

The section *Genocide Denial in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Law and Practice* analyses the legal framework and practice concerning genocide denial in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with an emphasis on the ways in which the legislative and judicial systems respond to the public denial of genocide and the glorification of war criminals. Particular attention is devoted to the application of the 2021 Amendments to the Criminal Code of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which prohibit the denial of genocide and war crimes, as well as the glorification of convicted war criminals—provisions that are, in practice, rarely applied consistently. The analysis addresses institutionalised mechanisms of genocide denial, including actions by the authorities of RS and Serbia, as

well as the slowness and inefficiency of prosecutorial bodies in pursuing such cases. A review of specific decisions issued by the Prosecutor's Office of Bosnia and Herzegovina between 2021 and 2024 illustrates how institutional denial and political support for revisionism perpetuate a sense of impunity, thereby undermining processes of dealing with the past, delivering justice, and fostering reconciliation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The methodological framework of this paper is based on an interdisciplinary approach that integrates historical analysis, legal interpretation, and comparative studies. The research draws upon both primary and secondary sources, including international and domestic judicial decisions, archival materials, reports from relevant institutions, and scholarly as well as expert literature.

Historical Overview – From the Genocide in Srebrenica to the United Nations Resolution

Since May 1992, Srebrenica and the surrounding area were under constant attacks by the RS Army and the Yugoslav Army. The attacks intensified at the end of 1992 and the beginning of 1993, when, with the help of the Užice Corps of the Yugoslav Army, enclaves in eastern Bosnia — Kamenica, Cerska, and Konjević-Polje — were captured. As a result of the advancement of the aggressor forces and mass expulsions, thousands of Bosniak civilians from the surrounding areas sought shelter in Srebrenica, which temporarily accommodated more than 40,000 refugees. However, continuous attacks, artillery shelling, and mass killings of civilians marked life in this besieged town. The UN Security Council declared Srebrenica a "safe area" on April 16, 1993, by Resolution 819.

Nevertheless, despite its formal status, Serbian forces continued their assaults on Srebrenica, while the international community failed to provide effective protection. The mass atrocities and ongoing shelling exposed the United Nations' inability to guarantee the safety of the population within the so-called "safe areas."¹ The population within the Srebrenica enclave lived under conditions devoid of fundamental necessities, including insufficient medical supplies and pharmaceuticals, a lack of basic hygiene items, and only minimal food provisions. Hostile actions by the VRS forces persisted even after the enclave was granted the status of a "safe zone," while the humanitarian situation, although marginally improved, remained critically inadequate (ICTY, 2017, paras. 2330–2334). At the beginning of 1995, the Canadian battalion of UNPROFOR was replaced by two Dutch battalions (ICTY, 2016, paras. 4977–4978).

On March 8, 1995, Directive No. 7, signed by Radovan Karadžić, explicitly delineated the RS's strategic approach concerning the "safe zones" in eastern Bosnia. The directive, among other provisions, instructed the Drina Corps of the RS Army to promptly execute the complete physical separation of Srebrenica and Žepa. It further mandated the Corps to "systematically conduct planned and deliberate combat operations on a daily basis to create conditions of total insecurity, intolerable hardship, and a complete lack of prospects for the continued existence and survival of the inhabitants of Srebrenica and Žepa (ICTY, 1995)." In early July 1995, pursuant to Directives 7 and 7/1, the order was issued to: "Completely isolate and reduce the

¹After the adoption of Resolution 824 on May 6, which extended the status of "safe area" to five additional towns—Žepa, Sarajevo, Tuzla, Goražde, and Bihać—alongside Srebrenica, the Agreement on the Demilitarization of Srebrenica and Žepa was signed on May 8. The agreement was signed by Sefer Halilović, Chief of the General Staff of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina Arm, and Ratko Mladić, Commander of the General Staff of the RS Army, with UNPROFOR representative Philippe Morillon acting as witness. ICTY, *The Case against Radovan Karadžić*, Exhibit no. D135, *Sporazum o demilitarizaciji Srebrenice i Žepe* [Agreement on the Demilitarization of Srebrenica and Žepa], 8. May 1993, 1–4; For more details on the demilitarization process, the surrender of weapons, and the control measures implemented by UNPROFOR forces, see: ICTY, *Trial Chamber Judgment against R. Karadžić*, Volume IV, par. 4973–4976; ICTY, *Trial Chamber Judgment against R. Mladić*, Volume III, par. 2341–2342.



enclaves of Srebrenica and Žepa through a sudden assault, enhance the tactical positioning of forces in the depth of the zone, and establish conditions for the elimination of the enclaves.” The RS Army operation, designated “Krivaja-95,” commenced on July 6, with RS Army forces entering Srebrenica on July 11, 1995 (ICTY, 1995). The following day, July 11, by 4:00 PM, members of the Dutch UN Battalion evacuated the remaining 4,000 to 5,000 civilians from the UN base in Srebrenica to the base in Potočari (ICTY, 1995/1996). The RS Army captured Srebrenica, and Ratko Mladić declared before television cameras in Srebrenica: “Here we are on July 11, 1995, in Serbian Srebrenica. On the eve of another great Serbian holiday, we present this town to the Serbian people. And finally, the moment has come to take revenge on the Turks in this region after the rebellion against the dahijas.” He then ordered the RS forces to advance toward Potočari (ICTY, 2017, para. 2410; ICTY, n.d.).

In the days following July 11, 1995, Bosniaks were, according to a predetermined plan, captured, taken away, and executed at previously identified locations, primarily within the municipalities of Zvornik and Bratunac. During the genocide in July 1995, at least 8,372 Bosniaks were killed, including 694 children. After Srebrenica fell, at the end of July, RS forces also took control of the “safe zone” of Žepa. Since 1996, 94 mass graves and 336 surface sites related to the genocide in and around Srebrenica in July 1995 have been discovered. Most of the victims’ remains were found in multiple secondary and tertiary mass graves, which indicates the extent to which the perpetrators of the genocide sought to conceal the facts and the truth about the scale of the atrocities. Approximately 1,000 victims of the genocide are still being sought (Džananović, 2024). The crimes committed have been adjudicated before the ICTY, the International Court of Justice in The Hague, as well as before national courts, and have been recognized, among other charges, as genocide against the Bosniaks. To date, more than 50 individuals have been convicted by various courts for genocide and war crimes committed in Srebrenica, receiving sentences totaling over 700 years of imprisonment. The entire political and military leadership of the self-proclaimed RS has been tried and convicted before the ICTY or the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (IRMCT).²

Additionally, judgments for genocide have been rendered by the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina.³

The first verdict by the ICTY in which the crimes against Bosniaks in and around Srebrenica in July 1995 were characterized as genocide was against Radislav Krstić, a general of the RS Army (ICTY, 2001; ICTY, 2004).

The political and military leaders of the RS, Radovan Karadžić and Ratko Mladić, were sentenced to life imprisonment and convicted of genocide against the Bosniaks (IRMCT, 2019; IRMCT, 2021). In the case against Jovica Stanišić and Franko Simatović, the heads of the Serbian State Security Service, before the ICTY and subsequently the IRMCT, the existence of a joint criminal enterprise within Bosnia and Herzegovina was established (Radio Slobodna Evropa, 2023).

The final judgment includes information concerning Trnovo and the execution of six Bosniak boys and men who were captured following the fall of Srebrenica in July 1995 (IRMCT, 2023, paras. 562–563). Some of the perpetrators have admitted responsibility for the crimes committed (ICTY, 1997; ICTY, 2003, paras. 2, 183; ICTY, 2006). The International Court of Justice has found Serbia partially responsible for failing to prevent the genocide committed against the Bosniak population in and around Srebrenica in July 1995, as well as for failing to prosecute and punish those responsible for these crimes (ICJ, 2007).

²For a more detailed insight into the proceedings, see: ICTY, Cases, <https://www.icty.org/en/cases>, accessed July 12, 2024; IRMCT, Cases, <https://www.irmct.org/en/cases>, accessed July 12, 2024.

³For a more detailed insight into the proceedings, see: Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Case Law, <https://www.sudbih.gov.ba/Court/Practice>, accessed January 12, 2024.



However, confronting the past and accepting international rulings remains a challenge for the political elites of the Republic of Serbia and the RS, which, through institutionalized mechanisms of denial, relativization, and revisionism, continue to destabilize Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The adoption of the UN Resolution on the Srebrenica genocide, which declared July 11th as the International Day of Commemoration of the Genocide in Srebrenica (UN General Assembly, 2024), provoked strong political resistance precisely from these entities, revealing a deep continuity of genocide denial and the deliberate maintenance of a mythologized nationalist narrative.

Denial of Genocide – The Final Stage of Genocide

According to Gregory H. Stanton, "genocide is a process that unfolds through ten stages, which are predictable but not inevitable. At each stage, genocide can be prevented through appropriate measures. The process is not linear. Multiple stages can occur simultaneously. Naturally, the initial stages must precede the later ones, but all stages of genocide continue to manifest throughout the entire process" (Stanton, n.d.).

The ten stages of genocide outlined and elaborated by Stanton are: classification, symbolization, discrimination, dehumanization, organization, polarization, preparation, persecution, extermination, and denial. Stanton's work on the stages of genocide represents a significant contribution to the theoretical elaboration of genocide and a better understanding of its process. Among genocide scholars, his matrix has been widely adopted as the most comprehensive framework for dividing the stages of genocide.⁴

Denial is the final stage that persists throughout the execution of genocide and invariably follows it. It stands as one of the most reliable indicators of impending genocidal massacres. Perpetrators of genocide exhume mass graves, burn bodies, attempt to conceal evidence, and intimidate witnesses. They deny having committed any crimes and often blame the victims for what occurred. They obstruct investigations into the crimes and continue to govern until forcibly removed from power, after which they flee into exile. Abroad, they often remain unpunished, as was the case with Pol Pot or Idi Amin, unless apprehended and tried by a tribunal established for their prosecution. The appropriate response to denial is punishment by international or national courts, where evidence can be examined and perpetrators held accountable (Stanton, n.d.). Tribunals such as the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia, or the International Court of Justice may not deter the worst genocidal perpetrators, but with sufficient political will to arrest and prosecute, some can be brought to justice (Stanton, n.d.).

Gregory Stanton's scholarly work on the stages of genocide constitutes a substantial contribution to the theoretical framework and deepens the understanding of the genocidal process. Among genocide theorists, his model of the sequential phases of genocide has been widely recognized as the most comprehensive and authoritative.

Genocide denial in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Three decades after the commencement of aggression and the perpetration of genocide against the Bosniak population, irredentist ambitions aimed at expanding territorial claims west of the Drina River

⁴Within the extensive preparations for the commission of genocide, every stage is carefully planned. If we agree with Stanton's division of the stages of genocide, it is clear that during the initial phases particular attention is given to denial as a stage that lasts the longest and receives significant focus both during the perpetration of the crimes and in the post-genocide period. Until 2012, Stanton presented the genocide process in eight stages, when he added two more stages: discrimination and persecution, while denial remained the final stage of genocide.

have persisted unabated. Furthermore, according to the theoretical framework delineating the stages of genocide, it is evident that the genocidal process in Bosnia and Herzegovina has not been terminated and currently resides in its final stage – the stage of denial. This denial of genocide persists at the local, regional, and international levels.⁵ The denial of the genocide committed in Srebrenica takes various forms, ranging from conspiracy theories to the outright rejection of facts established by international courts. One particularly widespread narrative claims that Srebrenica was “deliberately handed over” to the forces of the RS in order to provoke a NATO military intervention. However, the 1999 Report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations clearly and unequivocally rejects such claims, emphasizing that no evidence was found to support them (UN-a 53/35, 1998). The core strategy of genocide denial in Srebrenica is grounded in the systematic relativization of the scale of the atrocity, the minimization of the number of Bosniak victims, and the simultaneous inflation of the number of Serb civilian casualties in the broader Srebrenica region. These revisionist narratives are not static; rather, they have evolved over time in response to judicially established facts and shifting political contexts. Following the admission of guilt by Dražen Erdemović—one of the direct perpetrators of mass executions during the genocide—before the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), efforts emerged to discredit his testimony. These attempts framed his account as an “isolated and unreliable” statement, aiming to undermine its credibility as evidence of the systematic nature of the genocide (Herman, 2011, pp. 185–191; Čvikov, 2009, p. 6). Subsequently, once DNA identifications confirmed the identities of the victims, denialists began to challenge the validity of forensic methods (Herman, n.d., p. 280; Massey, n.d., p. 120).

Although the judgments of the ICTY and other courts unequivocally established that genocide had been committed, denial persisted institutionally through the authorities of RS and Serbia. The most blatant example was the “Report on Srebrenica” authored by Darko Trifunović, which the ICTY described as “one of the worst examples of revisionism (ICTY, 2004, para. 257).” It was only under international pressure that RS acknowledged the mass killings in Srebrenica in 2004, marking a period during which it appeared that the entity’s institutions were finally moving in the right direction. However, that acknowledgment was later challenged and undermined by the current authorities of RS, led by Milorad Dodik (Documentation Centre of Republic of Srpska, n.d.). Numerous institutions were also involved in genocide denial, including the “Srebrenica Historical Project” (SHP), which, with financial support from RS, propagated conspiracy theories and sought to relativize the genocide (Kovačević, 2016). The SHP organized multiple international conferences aimed at promoting revisionist narratives. Numerous denialists propagated theories of the “manipulation of Srebrenica” and linked the genocide to Western “imperial interventionism.”⁶

In 2019, the Government of RS established the so-called “Independent International Commission” with the stated purpose of investigating the suffering of all peoples in the Srebrenica region during the period from 1992 to 1995. The Commission’s report represents a revisionist attempt to reinterpret the events in Srebrenica. Challenging the legally established genocide, the report asserts that Bosniaks from Srebrenica participated in attacks on Serbian villages and that among the deceased were many combatants killed in battle rather than victims of systematic executions (Independent International Commission on Srebrenica, 2020).

⁵For a more detailed analysis, see: Mulagić, Elvedin, *Negiranje genocida nad Bošnjacima [Denial of the genocide against the Bosniaks]*, Institut za istraživanje zločina protiv čovječnosti i međunarodnog prava Univerziteta u Sarajevu, Sarajevo, 2014.

⁶For more details, see: Jasmin Medić, Hikmet Karčić, Muamer Džananović, Elvedin Mulagić, *The Politics of Revisionism: Denial of Crimes and Genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina 1992–2025 (Research Study)*, Univerzitet u Sarajevu – Institut za istraživanje zločina protiv čovječnosti i međunarodnog prava, Sarajevo, 2025.



The report, grounded in a politically motivated narrative, criticizes the ICTY's judicial decisions, accuses international organizations of bias, and relativizes the crimes committed by the RS Army. It places particular emphasis on crimes against Serbs during World War II, aiming to historically position Serbs as perpetual victims. Despite these efforts, Israeli historian Gideon Greif, the chairman of the Commission, later revised his views by acknowledging that over 8,000 Bosniaks were killed in July 1995 (Haaretz, 2022).

Simultaneously, the Srebrenica Memorial Center has recorded numerous instances of genocide denial in Serbia, Montenegro, and the RS entity. Between 2020 and 2024, more than 1,300 public acts of denial were documented. This denial includes statements made by the political leadership in both Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, with notable deniers including the President of Serbia Aleksandar Vučić, the Prime Minister of Serbia Ana Brnabić, and the President of RS Milorad Dodik. Among others, this group also includes the war criminal and politician Vojislav Šešelj, the then Serbian Minister of Defense Aleksandar Vulin, and numerous others (Hanson-Green, 2020; Cvjetičanin et al., 2021; Mehmedović et al., 2022; Džananović et al., 2023).

The media in Serbia and RS significantly contribute to genocide denial by uncritically broadcasting statements made by politicians and fostering revisionist narratives, including claims that place "NATO's responsibility" for the events in Srebrenica.

The Position of Serbia and Republika Srpska Regarding the Genocide Resolution

On May 23, 2024, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution declaring July 11 as the International Day of Commemoration of the Genocide in Srebrenica. The resolution also condemns the denial of the genocide and the glorification of war criminals (UN General Assembly, 2024). The resolution was adopted with the support of 84 countries, while 19 voted against it and 68 abstained. This act by the United Nations represents a significant step in the international recognition of the genocide in Srebrenica, forming part of a broader process of acknowledging responsibility for the crimes committed during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BBC News, 2024).

The countries that voted against the resolution were: Antigua and Barbuda, Belarus, China, Comoros, Cuba, North Korea, Congo, Dominica, Eritrea, Eswatini, Grenada, Hungary, Mali, Nauru, Nicaragua, Russia, São Tomé and Príncipe, Serbia, and Syria. Among these, Russia and Hungary stood out as the most prominent supporters of Milorad Dodik and his political activities within Bosnia and Herzegovina. Their decisions to back Dodik and his policies add an additional dimension to the international political dynamics surrounding the region. Hungary, led by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, openly supports Dodik, while the Russian authorities share a similar stance toward the RS leadership, having repeatedly demonstrated support for Dodik based on political and strategic motives that extend far beyond Bosnia and Herzegovina itself. Among the European countries that abstained were Slovakia, Greece, and Cyprus, while all other European nations, as well as the United States and Canada, supported the resolution.⁷

Various reports emerged regarding the extent of Serbia's lobbying efforts aimed at minimizing support for the resolution. For instance, the opposition to Aleksandar Vučić's regime in Serbia alleged that Honduras's abstention in the UN vote was a result of financial assistance provided to Serbia, claiming that Serbia paid USD 500,000 for the renovation of a hospital on the island of Roatán, Honduras. These allegations further complicate the situation and raise important questions about the influence of political lobbying on international decisions that ought to be grounded in justice, human rights, and international norms (Klix.ba, 2024).

⁷For more details, see: Jasmin Medić i dr, *The Politics of Revisionism*, 32-33.



The adoption of the Resolution was met with reactions in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, with the most vocal opponents being political leaders from Serbia and RS, led by Aleksandar Vučić and Milorad Dodik. Although the Resolution was passed at the UN, opponents argued that such a move could have serious political and territorial consequences for Bosnia and Herzegovina, particularly concerning the survival of the RS entity. According to their claims, the adoption of the Resolution would signal an initiative to abolish RS, as well as potential demands for war reparations. Furthermore, media outlets in Serbia and RS spoke of the danger of labeling the Serbian people as genocidal, which, according to them, could jeopardize the future of the Serbian people in Bosnia and Herzegovina—an assertion that has absolutely no basis in the substance of the Resolution.

Following the adoption of the Resolution, Milorad Dodik promptly declared that he would not accept its provisions, accusing the international community of bias. He even announced plans to propose the "separation" of RS from the rest of Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to restore the entity's sovereignty, a move that heightened political tensions further. Additionally, RS's Prime Minister Radovan Višković emphasized that this was not a secession but rather a "peaceful separation" from the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, warning that if the international community continues to label the Serbian people as genocidal, coexistence within a common state would become impossible (RTS, 2024).

Although international courts and numerous scholarly studies have unequivocally established that the genocide in Srebrenica was committed in 1995, political leaders of Serbia and RS, along with many of their allies, continue to deny these facts. Aleksandar Vučić, the President of Serbia, has repeatedly reiterated positions that minimize the crimes committed in Srebrenica, and his defense of Milorad Dodik and his political stance further fuels an atmosphere of denial and political revanchism. Vučić has on multiple occasions claimed that the issue is one of political manipulation rather than genuine war crimes, attempting to diminish Serbia's responsibility for the events in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the war. Similarly, even after the adoption of the UN Resolution, Dodik has continued to assert that the international community has unjustly condemned the Serbian people and has declared that he will not submit to any international judgment based on "politics (interview with the BBC, 2024)."

The United Nations General Assembly Resolution clearly affirms the obligation to prevent, punish, and remember genocide, thereby strengthening international law and supporting the victims of genocide. Its adoption is of crucial importance as it:

- Confirms the final and binding court judgments regarding the genocide in Srebrenica;
- Condemns all forms of genocide denial and the glorification of convicted war criminals;
- Establishes July 11 as a date of collective remembrance at the global level.

The Resolution also serves a strong preventive function—its acceptance sends a message that the international community will not tolerate attempts at revisionism or minimization of the crimes committed.

Following the adoption of the resolution, the Declaration on the Protection of National and Political Rights and the Common Future of the Serbian People — known as the "All-Serbian Assembly" Declaration — was adopted in Belgrade on 8 June 2024.

This declaration represents a key milestone in the political and ideological shaping of relations between Serbia and the RS (Svesrpski sabor, 2024).

This declaration is not merely a political document but symbolizes an effort to institutionalize and expand the concept of the "Serbian World," which aims to create a unified space through cultural, educa-

tional, energy, and infrastructural integration of Serbian territories, with a particular emphasis on the centralization of authority and political actions beyond the framework of international norms that respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The declaration was adopted with the participation of the highest political, religious, and academic representatives from the Republic of Serbia and RS, including presidents and government members, members of the national assemblies of both entities, as well as senior representatives of the Serbian Orthodox Church. This document sends a political message that the unification of policies and interests between Serbia and RS continues, with the goal of creating a homogeneous space that encompasses not only territorial and political connectivity but also cultural and identity cohesion of the Serbian people.

In practice, this implies the reduction of interstate borders and the strengthening of ties in education, culture, energy, and transportation, thereby creating a unified “Serbian space” in which RS, supported by Serbia, would not only achieve political stabilization but also economic consolidation through strategic projects.

One of the key sections of the Declaration addresses the denial and rejection of international justice concerning the genocide in Srebrenica. Specifically, the Declaration explicitly rejects the United Nations Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on May 23, 2024, which recognizes the genocide in Srebrenica and condemns its denial. Points 16 and 17 of the Declaration expressly state that the “All-Serbian Assembly” does not accept the UN Resolution, claiming it constitutes an attempt at collective blaming of the entire Serbian people, which is deemed unacceptable. The Declaration notes that while 84 countries voted in favor of the Resolution, 109 countries opposed or abstained, thereby calling into question the validity and legitimacy of international decisions implicating the Serbian people’s responsibility for the genocide.

This position can be viewed as part of a broader attempt at political revisionism, which is not only focused on denying the genocide but also on reinterpreting historical facts, including presenting the events in Srebrenica from 1992 to 1995 in a different light. According to the Declaration, the “All-Serbian Assembly” welcomes the efforts of the Republic of Serbia and RS to clarify historical facts, emphasizing that these efforts are part of a process of restoring Serbian identity and dignity.

This approach leads to a continuous rewriting of history, suppressing not only the facts about the genocide but also the international rulings that have clearly established responsibility for the crimes committed in Srebrenica. Such an approach poses a serious challenge to achieving reconciliation and building stability in the Balkans, as it continues to deepen divisions and misunderstandings among the peoples.

In the context of this Declaration, the RS Memorial Center is being established as an institution intended to serve as a symbol of Serbian victims during the wars of the 1990s. This initiative is part of a broader effort to portray Serbs as victims of wartime atrocities while simultaneously minimizing responsibility for the crimes committed. The decision to establish the Memorial Center, expected to be implemented by 2025, demonstrates how the “Serbian World” policy aims to institutionalize a narrative of victimhood while suppressing the truth about the genocide and war crimes committed against other peoples, such as the Bosniaks.

The denial of the genocide in Srebrenica, beyond being a political issue, is also manifested in attempts to minimize or completely ignore the crimes committed against the victims, thereby denying them justice. This practice is most evident in the context of educational programs and public discourse, where there are frequent attempts to alter the narrative surrounding the events of July 1995, creating the impression



that the crimes were neither systematic nor motivated by ethnic hatred. Given the historical significance of Srebrenica, such revisionist attempts not only deny the true nature of the crimes but also show a profound disrespect towards the victims who endured unimaginable suffering.

Further activities aimed at politically linking RS with the institutional framework of the Republic of Serbia, such as those prescribed by the Declaration of the “All-Serbian Assembly,” require serious consideration in the context of their impact on memory politics and confronting the past. The continued encouragement of genocide denial in Srebrenica and attempts to construct political narratives that minimize the significance of this genocide may have profound negative consequences on social stability, the reconciliation process, and Bosnia and Herzegovina’s international relations.

In this light, it is essential to ensure that the Memorial Center and other institutions dealing with war crimes and genocide issues receive support for their activities, and that the international community continues to take concrete measures against genocide denial.

Genocide Denial in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Law and Practice

The decision by Valentin Inzko, then High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina, to enact the Law on Amendments to the Criminal Code of Bosnia and Herzegovina in mid-2021—which, among other provisions, prohibited the denial of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes, as well as the glorification of convicted war criminals—did not halt the continuation of these practices.⁸

The glorification of war criminals and the encouragement of genocide denial against Bosniaks constitute official policy among both the ruling authorities and the dominant segments of the opposition in the Republic of Serbia and the RS. These authorities clearly remain unwilling to accept the reality that small segments of Bosniak and Croat minorities still live in RS, which they consider part of their envisioned greater-state territory. Through their actions and rhetoric, they send the message that coexistence is unwanted and that they do not seek peacebuilding, but rather the continued dismantling of Bosnian society.

The disregard for decisions and positions of the High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the ignoring of rulings by the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, unconstitutional conduct, the undermining and denial of Bosnia and Herzegovina’s sovereignty, the glorification of convicted war criminals, genocide denial, and the celebration of the unconstitutional “January 9, 1992,” are just some of the activities organized, implemented, and supported by political structures within RS, with the strong and decisive support of official Belgrade.

Despite legal provisions that criminalize genocide denial, the Prosecutor’s Office of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the relevant investigative bodies are frequently criticized for their slow and ineffective handling of such cases. This approach further reinforces a sense of impunity and allows the continuation of public denial of crimes, thereby undermining the process of confronting the past and achieving reconciliation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

To date, only a few criminal proceedings have been initiated on the grounds of genocide denial. In order to supplement the detailed analysis of final prosecutorial decisions not to initiate investigations in such cases, this report also includes decisions issued after the publication of the *Report on Genocide Denial in Srebrenica* in 2023. Between July 2021 and August 2024, over 30 such decisions were issued, declining to pursue investigations for reported acts of genocide denial (Grebo, 2023).

⁸OHR, <http://www.ohr.int/odluka-visokog-predstavnika-kojom-se-donosi-zakon-o-dopuni-kaznenogzakona-bosne-i-hercegovine/>



Conclusion

This paper has demonstrated that the political and institutional structures of the Republic of Serbia and the Bosnian entity RS, more than three decades after the genocide in Srebrenica in 1995, continue to systematically deny the crime and engage in historical revisionism, even in the aftermath of the United Nations General Assembly Resolution on the Srebrenica genocide. The rejection of the Resolution by these authorities, alongside a small number of UN member states, confirms that denial is not an isolated political stance, but rather a continuous state strategy aimed at undermining recognition of the genocide and obstructing justice for the victims.

The analysis of specific reactions shows that institutionalized practices—including political statements, the glorification of convicted war criminals, and the announced establishment of alternative “memorial centers” through the “All-Serbian Assembly”—function as long-term mechanisms of denial that directly impede reconciliation, justice, and lasting stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the wider Western Balkans region. The 2021 law against genocide denial and the glorification of war criminals, enacted by the decision of the High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina, represents a historic legal milestone, yet its inconsistent implementation illustrates the persistence of revisionism within both political and cultural structures.

In conclusion, the responses of Serbia and RS to the UN Resolution underscore that the struggle against institutionalized genocide denial must rely on consistent legal enforcement, sustained international oversight, and education on historical truth. Addressing this institutionalized denial is crucial not only for honoring the victims and their families but also for advancing justice, reconciliation, and long-term stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the wider Western Balkans. This study clearly demonstrates that the recognition of the genocide and active resistance to revisionism remain central challenges and imperatives for the international community, legal institutions, and all defenders of human rights.



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Author Details	Muamer Džananović (Dr.)
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¹ University of Sarajevo, Institute for Research of Crimes Against Humanity and International Law, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

 0009-0003-6803-0206  muamer.dzananovic@institut-genocid.unsa.ba

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