



**To**

**The General Assembly of the United Nations (UNGA)**

**President of the General Assembly**

**H.E. Mr. Dennis Francis**

Srebrenica/Belgrad/Göttingen/New York 23. April 2024

## **Appeal to the General Assembly of the United Nations**

### **Unite behind the Srebrenica Genocide Commemoration Resolution**

In a letter addressed to every Member State of the United Nations, Gesellschaft für bedrohte Völker (GfbV) / Society for Threatened Peoples (STP), Memorial Center Srebrenica and the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia [ and Jews Against Genocide] are calling for the UN's General Assembly to vote in support of a GA Resolution that seeks to establish July 11 as the International Day of Reflection and Commemoration for the 1995 Genocide in Srebrenica. "This Resolution will significantly advance the cause of human rights and justice in the Western Balkans and weaken the toxic hold of extremist nationalists on the future of the younger generation there", according to Jasna Causevic, GfbV/STP's Specialist on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect.

In July 1995, Bosnian Serb soldiers under the command of the former Yugoslav general Ratko Mladić murdered more than 8,000 Bosniak (Bosnian Muslim) residents of the town, predominantly men and boys but also including a number of women. As former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan later acknowledged, the United Nations and its peace-keeping force failed in their duty to protect lives entrusted to their care.

Despite the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Court of Justice (ICJ) both ruling that what happened at Srebrenica constituted a crime of genocide, Serbia and its Bosnian Serb associates have steadfastly refused to accept the Courts' findings, including the ICJ's 2007 decision that Serbia had failed in its duty to prevent genocide. In 2015 a UN Security Council Resolution similar to the proposed GA Resolution was vetoed by Serbia's ally, the Russian Federation.

Vučić, who perversely calls for international law to be respected, maintains that Russia and China would veto another Security Council Resolution. The current Resolution is due to be discussed by the 193 UN Member States in the General Assembly on 2 May. Its adoption requires a two-thirds majority in

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favour and Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić is lobbying intensely to secure the votes needed to block it.

"The nationalist reaction that we are seeing on the streets of Republika Srpska today is truly frightening. Hysterical rhetoric and strident hate speech are being used to whip up opposition to the General Assembly Resolution", Causevic warns. "UN Member States must see these protests for what they are. The President of Serbia, Vučić, and the President of the Republika Srpska entity of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Milorad Dodik, are seeking to radicalise the younger generation and exploit unresolved regional tensions. The successors of Slobodan Milošević and Radovan Karadžić are rejecting this dignified and respectful form of memorialisation in order to deny young Serbs access to the truth about their past, in the hope of perpetuating division and conflict in the Western Balkans."

"Adoption of this Resolution would send an emphatic message that the world is not prepared to tolerate genocide denial," Causevic insists. Sonja Biserko, founder of the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, charges the opponents of the Resolution with holding the basic ideals of the United Nations in contempt: "The Resolution upholds the UN's beacon principles of truth, justice, democracy and respect for human rights. Serbia's long overdue moral renewal is a necessary precondition for any normalization of relations across the region. "

Emir Suljagić, Head of Memorial Center Srebrenica, warns of dangerous consequences: "Denial of a crime is the clearest sign that it will be repeated".

Sharon Silber, Jews Against Genocide, emphasizes: "Ongoing denial of the genocide in Bosnia by the governments of Serbia and Republika Srpska, now almost 30 years after the Srebrenica Massacre, is deeply disturbing. It is past time for Serbia to come to grips with its past just as Germany did in the years following the Holocaust. It may not be a pleasant process but it is an essential one. As we commemorate Genocide Awareness Month, it is important that we memorialize the events at Srebrenica by their proper name—genocide."

Remembrance and memorialisation are crucial to preventing future genocides. We the undersigned urge all the Member States of the United Nations, including Serbia, to demonstrate their belief in and respect for the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by joining the sponsors and co-sponsors in giving their full and enthusiastic support to the General Assembly Resolution.

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*For human rights. Worldwide.*



Society for  
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with consultative status at  
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