

# STATE OF DENIAL

SERBIA 2022  
TIME OF SILENT PRIDE



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# Introduction

Since it was established in 2003, the Youth Initiative for Human Rights (YIHR) has consistently advocated for a society built upon truth, justice, responsibility, freedom, democracy, and peace. According to YIHR activists, dealing with the past, acknowledging the facts surrounding crimes committed during the armed conflicts in former Yugoslavia, and accepting responsibility for them are essential for fostering such a society.

The YIHR diligently monitors and reports on the instances of the denial and relativisation of war crimes and other human rights violations within the context of armed conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, as well as on the glorification of persons convicted of war crimes and their political use in the public discourse of Serbia. Facts-based discussion about the past has nearly vanished from the public sphere, which is currently dominated by denial, relativisation and ethnonationalism. Through its ongoing efforts, the YIHR emphasises the detrimental impact of such policies, asserting that they hinder the attainment of justice and the establishment of a society capable of honouring all victims, as a crucial prerequisite for fostering trust and reconciliation among communities.

The prevalent practice of denying and downplaying events from the past underscores the necessity for structured annual overview. This overview can facilitate a better understanding of the prevailing patterns of denial within the contemporary Serbian society.

## Attitude Towards the Past

After the overthrow of Slobodan Milošević and the ascension of the democratic opposition to power in 2000, the Serbian society's attitude towards the wartime 1990s underwent several stages.

The first stage, spanning from the formation of the new government in 2001 until the assassination of Serbian Prime Minister Zoran Đinđić in March 2003, was characterised by international calls for Serbia's cooperation with the Hague Tribunal and a departure from the Slobodan Milošević regime. Within the governing coalition, consensus on these matters was lacking, often leading to inconsistent actions: the public was made aware of the transfer of several hundred corpses of Kosovo Albanians into mass graves in Serbia to conceal the crimes; however, no prosecution occurred, and there was a lack of institutional reform to remove individuals closely associated with the former regime.<sup>1</sup>

The second phase started with Vojislav Kostunica's coming into power in March 2004. During this period, cooperation with the Hague Tribunal intensified, employing the strategy of 'voluntary surrender' of the accused. This approach was accompanied by significant material support to the families of the accused, the ceremonial send-off of the perceived 'heroes', and the creating of narratives about the 'unfair' Tribunal.<sup>2</sup>

1 Izveštaj o tranzicionoj pravdi u Srbiji, Crnoj Gori i na Kosovu, 1999–2005, HLC, December 2006, pp. 9–10, available at: <http://www.hlc-rdc.org/images/stories/publikacije/03-tranzicija-srpski.pdf>

2 Izveštaj o tranzicionoj pravdi u Srbiji, Crnoj Gori i na Kosovu, 1999–2005, HLC, December 2006, pp. 9–10, available at: <http://www.hlc-rdc.org/images/stories/publikacije/03-tranzicija-srpski.pdf>

The subsequent phase began with the signing of the Declaration on Political Reconciliation by the Democratic Party and Socialist Party of Serbia, leading to the rehabilitation of Slobodan Milošević's party. However, the Declaration refrained from addressing the wars of the 1990s or questioning Milošević's role in them. This created space for denial, relativisation and 'ignoring of the human rights violations committed by the Serbian military, police and paramilitary forces'.<sup>3</sup>

Despite the democratic authorities' often inadequately defined and utilitarian attitude towards the past, a dramatic shift occurred when the coalition gathered around the Serbian Progressive Party assumed power in 2012. This was the first government since the 2000 change which derived its political legitimacy from the 1990s, embracing a revisionist interpretation of the past.<sup>4</sup> The new approach was encapsulated in the slogan championed by Aleksandar Vulin, then serving as the defence minister: 'The time of shame has passed; this is the time of silent pride'.

## Time of Silent Pride - An Organised Oblivion

The shift in the approach to the past is grounded in the revival of myths propagated by the Slobodan Milošević regime, particularly those surrounding defensive wars waged by Serbia and the perceived unjust prosecution of deserving officers and soldiers. These myths serve as a basis for constructing a new narrative that relies on lies, euphemisms, half-truths, relativisation, and legalistic and verbal acrobatics in public discourse. This revised perspective on the past has been formalised through laws and bylaws dictating what we do remember and how; it is reinforced by the production of content aimed at reinterpreting and relativising court-established facts about the wars of the 1990s.

The construction of a new attitude towards the past involves the active participation of national and local officials, political party members, media, state authorities and institutions, as well as individuals, including those convicted for war crimes who play a prominent role. In Serbia, war criminals 'have been regarded as heroes and treated as innocent, unlawfully convicted men and awarded benefits that cannot be said to be justified [.]' Public officials openly glorify the role of the convicted war criminals, who frequently appear as guests on TV stations and play significant role in the political and social sphere. Due to the widespread glorification of war criminals, two applications have been filed with the European Court for Human Rights so far. These applications highlight the involvement of individuals convicted for war crimes in Serbia's political life, specifically Veselin Šljivančanin and the so-called Kosovo Five, their promotion after having committed war crimes, the retention of their ranks, and the publication of their books.<sup>5</sup>

3 Memory Politics of the 1990s Wars in Serbia: Historical Revisionism and Challenges of Memory Activism, HLC, October 2021, p. 12, available at: [https://www.hlc-rdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Politika\\_secanja\\_en.pdf](https://www.hlc-rdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Politika_secanja_en.pdf)

4 Memory Politics of the 1990s Wars in Serbia: Historical Revisionism and Challenges of Memory Activism, HLC, October 2021, p. 7, available at: [https://www.hlc-rdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Politika\\_secanja\\_en.pdf](https://www.hlc-rdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Politika_secanja_en.pdf)

5 Material Reparations in Proceedings for Damages – The Practice of Courts in Serbia from 2021–2022, HLC, April 2023, pp. 20-21, available at: [https://hlc-rdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Materijalne\\_reparacije\\_2022\\_ENG.pdf](https://hlc-rdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Materijalne_reparacije_2022_ENG.pdf)

The shift in the political attitude towards the wartime past and its instrumentalisation is evident in commemorative practices, now manifested as state-sponsored events. State commemorations are characterised by ethnocentricity, militarisation, the portrayal of victims as heroes, marginalisation, and denial. Inclusive commemorative practices are quite rare, with civilian victims of war almost entirely neglected in public discourse. The emphasis is placed on highlighting the suffering of fighters, attributing to them the ideal of sacrificing their lives for their homeland, regardless of the circumstances of their death. In spite of the state-sponsored commemorations for events such as the beginning of the NATO bombing or the day of remembrance for those killed or persecuted in the 'Storm' operation, there is no debate in the society about these events, nor are they contextualised within the broader armed conflicts. The lack of discussion inevitably leads to the denial of the victims and suffering of others.<sup>6</sup>

The new approach is extending into pop culture, as well, where images of war criminals are becoming part of urban aesthetics through murals and graffiti. For instance, a mural featuring Ratko Mladić appeared on 23 July 2021 on the façade of a residential building at the corner of Njegoševa and Alekse Nenadovića Street in Belgrade. A day later, the hand with which Mladić salutes was painted red. Despite the Vračar Municipality's communal inspection ordering the removal of the mural shortly thereafter, three months later it was still there.

In early November 2021, the YIHR invited citizens to join them on 9 November, the International Day against Fascism and Antisemitism, for an action to remove the said mural. The gathering was reported to the police.<sup>7</sup> On 5 November 2021, the Ministry of the Interior issued a decision to prohibit the planned gathering, citing the potential for 'physical conflict' due to the 'assembly of a larger number of persons expressing indignation and opposition to the event.'<sup>8</sup>

The refusal of institutions and services to remove the Ratko Mladić mural from the façade in Njegoševa Street in Belgrade, in spite of the request from the residents of the building, as well as the prevention of the activists from removing the mural themselves, directly contributed to the emergence of a trend of glorifying war criminals by painting their images or writing their names on town façades throughout Serbia. Following November 2021, several hundred graffiti, stencils, and murals dedicated to Ratko Mladić appeared on town façades. While competent authorities failed to react, citizens and activists took it upon themselves to destroy or handle these drawings almost on a daily basis.<sup>9</sup>

Serbian society today lives in a culture of denial that 'encourages turning a collective blind eye, leaving horrors unexamined or

6 Report on Commemorations of War Crimes in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Montenegro, YIHR, January 2022, p. 35, available at: [https://www.yihr.rs/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/YIHR-Izve%C5%A1taj-o-komemoracijama-ratnih-zlo%C4%8Dina-u-Srbiji-Bosni-i-Hercegovini-Kosovu-i-Crnoj-Gori-2021\\_FHD\\_01.pdf](https://www.yihr.rs/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/YIHR-Izve%C5%A1taj-o-komemoracijama-ratnih-zlo%C4%8Dina-u-Srbiji-Bosni-i-Hercegovini-Kosovu-i-Crnoj-Gori-2021_FHD_01.pdf)

7 Poziv na skup – uklanjanje murala Ratka Mladića sa fasade u Njegoševoj ulici, utorak 9. novembar u 16 časova [Call to Gathering – Removal of the Ratko Mladić Mural from the Façade in Njegoševa Street, Tuesday, 9 November at 16.00], YIHR, 5 November 2021, available at: <https://www.yihr.rs/bhs/poziv-na-skup-uklanjanje-murala-ratka-mladica-sa-fasade-u-njegosevoj-ulici-utorak-9-novembar-u-16-casova/>

8 Zabranom skupa za 9. novembar MUP Srbije brani zločinca Mladića [By Prohibiting the 9 November Gathering, the Interior Ministry of Serbia is Defending War Criminal Mladić], YIHR, 5 November 2021, available at: <https://www.yihr.rs/bhs/zabranom-skupa-za-9-novembar-mup-srbije-brani-zlocinca-mladica/>

9 Uništena još 3 Mladićeve murala u Beogradu [Another Three Mladić's Murals in Belgrade Destroyed], Luftika, 12 November 2021, available at: <https://luftika.rs/unistena-jos-3-mladiceva-murala/>, accessed on 5 August 2023. Nalepnice „Ratko Mladić osuđen za genocid” u Lučanima [Stickers 'Ratko Mladić Convicted for Genocide' in Lučani], OzonPress, available at: <http://www.ozonpress.net/drustvo/nalepnice-ratko-mladic-osudjen-za-genocid/>, accessed on 5 August 2023.

normalised as being part of the rhythm of everyday life', while any acknowledgment of what had happened becomes a ground for disqualification from social (national) life.<sup>10</sup>

## Legalisation of the New Approach

### Amendments and Supplements to the Criminal Code

In November 2016, the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia adopted amendments and supplements to the Criminal Code incriminating public approval or denial of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes, where such criminal offences are determined by a final judgment of a court in Serbia or the International Criminal Court.<sup>11</sup> Prohibition of denial does not include crimes determined by the judgments of the International Criminal Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and International Court of Justice (ICJ), thus actually providing legal protection to those denying the facts established by these courts.<sup>12</sup>

### Law on prohibition of gatherings of neo-Nazi and fascist organisations and associations and prohibition of display of neo-Nazi and fascist symbols and insignia

Law on prohibition of gatherings of neo-Nazi and fascist organisations and associations and prohibition of display of neo-Nazi or fascist symbols and insignia has been in force in Serbia since 2009. Article 4 of this Law provides for the prohibition of producing, making copies, storing, presenting, distributing or using in any other manner any symbols that advertise or justify ideas, actions or acts of persons for which these persons were convicted for war crimes.<sup>13</sup> Although this Law imposes fines for the violation of the prohibition outlined in Article 4 for legal entities, the sale of products glorifying persons convicted for war crimes remains unsanctioned.

In February 2022, invoking this Law, too, the YIHR filed a request to initiate misdemeanour proceedings against members of the supporters' group 'Delije' for insulting coach Mirko Vičević on national grounds during water polo match between Red Star and Šabac on 5 February. The request also addressed the shouting of 'Ratko Mladić' and 'Mladić, my boy, you have a problem that you are a Serbian hero'<sup>14</sup> in downtown Belgrade.<sup>15</sup> The Belgrade Misdemeanour Court rejected the request citing the failure to provide personal

<sup>10</sup> 'States of Denial', Stanley Cohen, Samizdat B92, 2003, p. 159.

<sup>11</sup> Criminal Code, Article 387, available at: <https://www.paragraf.rs/propisi/krivicni-zakonik-2019.html>

<sup>12</sup> Legal Protection for the Denial of Genocide in Srebrenica, HLC, 17 November 2016, available at: <http://www.hlc-rdc.org/?p=32958&lang=de>

<sup>13</sup> Law on prohibition of gatherings of neo-Nazi and fascist organisations and associations and prohibition of display of neo-Nazi or fascist symbols and insignia, available at: [https://www.paragraf.rs/propisi/zakon\\_o\\_zabrani\\_manifestacija\\_neonacistickih\\_ili\\_fasistickih\\_organizacija\\_i\\_udruzenja\\_i\\_zabrani\\_upotrebe\\_neonacistickih.html](https://www.paragraf.rs/propisi/zakon_o_zabrani_manifestacija_neonacistickih_ili_fasistickih_organizacija_i_udruzenja_i_zabrani_upotrebe_neonacistickih.html)

<sup>14</sup> Reference to the popular pop song from the 1980s.

<sup>15</sup> Linč bivšeg trenera vaterpolo kluba Crvena zvezda Mirka Vičevića ne sme ostati nekažnjen [Lynching Former Coach of the Water Polo Club Red Star Mirko Vičević Must not Remain Unpunished], YIHR, 21 February 2022, available at: <https://yihr.rs/bhs/linc-bivseg-trenera-vaterpolo-kluba-crvena-zvezda-mirka-vicevica-ne-sme-ostati-nekaznjen/>

data of the accused, leading the YIHR to lodge an appeal, which was also rejected. In late March 2023, the YIHR filed a constitutional complaint against the decision of the Belgrade Misdemeanour Court. In this process, judicial institutions failed to respond to the display of symbols representing hate speech, the glorification of war criminals, and discrimination against citizens of non-Serb nationality.

## Law on War Memorials

In 2018, the National Assembly of Serbia passed the Law on War Memorials, defining a war memorial as ‘a symbol of significance for nurturing the tradition of the liberation wars of Serbia’.<sup>16</sup> This Law restricts the installation of memorials that do not align with the ‘tradition of the liberation wars of Serbia’. In practical terms, this makes it impossible to commemorate the suffering of ‘others’, specifically those whose suffering is attributed to the Serbian authorities. Consequently, the installation of monuments at locations where mass graves containing the remains of Kosovo Albanians in the territory of Serbia were discovered would be deemed illegal. Similarly, marking locations of camps for Croats and Bosniaks or commemorating the shelling of the village of Kukurovići in 1993 by the Užice Corps of the Yugoslav Army would also be prohibited.

## Bylaw on ‘Veteran Medal’

In late March 2023, the Government of Serbia passed a Bylaw on the ‘Veteran Medal’, establishing it as a special national recognition for ‘individuals who have attained the status of a veteran according to the Law on the Rights of War Veterans, Disabled War Veterans, Civilian Invalids of War, and Their Family Members’. The Bylaw includes a provision for the revocation of the right to the Veteran Medal if the recipient is convicted of criminal offences against the constitutional order and security of the Republic of Serbia, as well as criminal offences against humanity and other rights guaranteed by international law, by a final court judgement in the Republic of Serbia. However, it does not exclude individuals convicted of war crimes before the ICTY or other courts.<sup>17</sup>

# State resources in the service of denial

## Decorations

In late 2011, Ljubiša Diković, the former commander of the 37th Motorised Brigade of the Yugoslav Army, was appointed Chief of the General Staff at the Serbian Armed Forces. A month later, the Humanitarian Law Centre published a file, presenting evidence of murders, rape, mugging, and persecution of the Albanian population in the zone of responsibility of the 37th Motorised Brigade during

<sup>16</sup> Law on War memorials, available at: <https://www.paragraf.rs/propisi/zakon-o-ratnim-memorijalima.html>

<sup>17</sup> Bylaw on the ‘Veteran Medal’, Official Gazette of RS, no. 25 of 31 March 2023.



the Kosovo war.<sup>18</sup> Despite these allegations, Diković retained his position until his retirement in 2018, receiving several decorations. In 2015, Diković was awarded the Order of the White Eagle of the 1st class by the then-President Tomislav Nikolić, for his merits in building the defence system of the Republic of Serbia. Upon his retirement in 2018, President of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić decorated Diković with the Order of Karadorđe Star of the 1st class, which is awarded for 'particular merits for the Republic of Serbia and its citizens in the areas of representing the state and its citizens'.<sup>19</sup> In 2019, Members of the 37th Motorised Brigade were also awarded Military Medals.<sup>20</sup>

In January 2017, President of Serbia Tomislav Nikolić met with Momčilo Krajišnik, a former member of the Republic of Srpska leadership, convicted by the ICTY for crimes against humanity and sentenced to the 20 years' imprisonment. The press release stated that their discussion focused on 'the position and protection of human rights of Serbs in the region'. During the meeting, Krajišnik awarded President Nikolić with the 1991 October Medal of the Republic of Srpska 1991.<sup>21</sup>

In late 2021, Milan Mojsilović, the Chief of the General Staff of the Serbian Armed Forces, awarded a military medal to the retired Yugoslav Army General Vinko Pandurević for 'participation in the defence against NATO aggression on FRY'. At the same time, Mojsilović received a memorial medal from the Club of the Generals and Admirals of Serbia, of which Pandurević is a member. During the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Pandurević served as an officer of the Republic of Srpska Army. As the commander of the Zvornik Brigade of the Drina Corps, he was convicted by the ICTY for crimes committed in Srebrenica.

In mid-May 2021, commemorating the 190th anniversary of the Guard, the Commander of the Guard of the Serbian Armed Forces presented to the retired general Veselin Šljivančanin an award representing the highest recognition for the contribution in the promotion, work, and reputation of the Guard. Šljivančanin was convicted by the ICTY for the war crime in Ovčara. Currently, he holds a position on the Main Board of the Serbian Progressive Party. Details of Šljivančanin's decoration were absent from the news coverage of the Day of the Guard, as reported on the websites of both the Ministry of Defence and the Serbian Armed Forces. However, the information was published on the website of the Serbian Progressive Party's Town Committee in Jagodina.<sup>22</sup>

18 'Ljubiša Diković' File, HLC, 23 January 2012, available at: <https://www.hlc-rdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Ljubisa-Dikovic-File-and-Annex.pdf>. In January 2015, the Humanitarian Law Centre also published the 'Rudnica' File, presenting evidence of the mass grave in Rudnica in which the remains of victims killed in the zone of responsibility of the 37<sup>th</sup> Motorised Brigade were discovered. 'Rudnica' File, HLC, 29 January 2015, available at: [https://www.hlc-rdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Dosije\\_Rudnica\\_eng.pdf](https://www.hlc-rdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Dosije_Rudnica_eng.pdf). Two years later, the HLC released a film dealing with the zone of responsibility of the 37<sup>th</sup> Motorised Brigade and Ljubiša Diković's role in war crimes. Film 'General Diković and 37<sup>th</sup> Brigade in Kosovo', available at: <http://www.hlc-rdc.org/?p=33391>

19 Decrees on Decorations by the President of the Republic of Serbia, available at: <https://www.predsednik.rs/lat/predsednik/ukazi-o-odlikovanjima>. Diković was a recipient of several military medals and decorations, as well. Upon his decoration in 2015, the YIHR organised protests under the slogan 'Truth, Not Medals', YIHR, 13 February 2015, available at: <https://www.yihr.rs/bhs/istraga-a-ne-orden/>

20 Dodela vojnih spomenica pripadnicima 37. motorizovane brigade [Awarding Military Medals to the Members of 37<sup>th</sup> Motorised Brigade], Serbian Armed Forces, 5 June 2019, available at: [https://www.vs.rs/sr\\_lat/vesti/F191FD9587B711E9B2180050568F5424/dodela-vojnih-spomenica-pripadnicima-37motorizovane-brigade](https://www.vs.rs/sr_lat/vesti/F191FD9587B711E9B2180050568F5424/dodela-vojnih-spomenica-pripadnicima-37motorizovane-brigade)

21 Predsednik Nikolić primio haškog osuđenika Momčila Krajišnika [President Nikolić Received the Hague Convict Momčilo Krajišnik], Insajder, 11 January 2017, available at: <https://insajder.net/arhiva/vesti/predsednik-nikolic-primio-haskog-osudenika-momčila-krajišnika>, accessed on 30 August 2023.

22 Nikoli Radosavljeviću uručeno najviše priznanje Garde Srbije [Nikola Radosavljević Presented with the Highest Award by the Serbian Guard], GO Jagodina SNS, 5 May 2021, available at: <https://jagodina.sns.org.rs/lat/novosti/vesti/nikoli-radosavljevicu-uruceno-najvise-priznanje-garde-srbije>, accessed on 23 August 2023.

## Providing Public Spaces

Since his release from prison having served two-thirds of the sentence for aiding and abetting the torture of prisoners in Ovčara, Veselin Šljivančanin has organised more than 30 book promotions in public institutions across Serbia.<sup>23</sup> Further, Šljivančanin is a frequent guest at panel discussions hosted by the ruling party.<sup>24</sup> Public institutions, often town municipality halls, also serve as common venues for book promotions by Vojislav Šešelj.<sup>25</sup>

One of the participants in the roundtable organised by the Office for Kosovo and Metohija, body of the Government of Serbia, was Vinko Pandurević.<sup>26</sup>

In early December 2015, the Government of Serbia organised the return of Vladimir Lazarević, the former commander of the Priština Corps of the Yugoslav Army, to Serbia after serving his sentence for crimes against humanity. Lazarević returned to Serbia accompanied by the then Defence Minister Bratislav Gašić (currently Minister of the Interior) and Justice Minister Nikola Selaković (currently Minister for Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Issues). Since leaving the prison, Lazarević has been present at almost all state commemorations, has been engaged as a lecturer by invitation at the Military Academy, and is involved in the political life in Serbia.<sup>27</sup>

## Proponents of New Narrative

Proponents of the new narrative include almost all state officials, as well as state institutions, bodies, and agencies. One of the key figures in constructing the revisionist narrative is Aleksandar Vulin, the former director of the Security Intelligence Agency (BIA), who previously led three different ministries. A common feature of all the ministries led by Vulin is their transformation into platforms for reinterpreting Serbia's role in the wars between 1991 and 1999, and revitalising the myths established during the rule of Slobodan Milošević. This trend reached its peak during his tenure at the Ministry of Defence and Ministry of the Interior, where he reinforced the myths of waging imposed and defensive wars which we came out of proudly, heroic battles of a small people against the most powerful countries in the world, and the long-standing aspiration of all Serbs living in one state. It is noteworthy that the continued pursuit of such action reflects a clear state policy that Vulin has been tasked to pursue as an individual.<sup>28</sup>

23 In the course of 2021, Serbia has continued with the revisionism of the wars of the 1990s, HLC, 30 December 2021, available at: <http://www.hlc-rdc.org/?p=38276&lang=de>

24 Civil society organisations reacted to such practice on multiple occasions, demanding the cancellation of events featuring individuals convicted of war crimes as speakers. Activists from the Youth Initiative for Human Rights were physically attacked and forcibly removed from a panel discussion hosted by the Serbian Progressive Party in Beška, where Veselin Šljivančanin was one of the speakers. See: Election Campaign in Serbia is the Greatest Threat to Peace in the Region, YIHR, 16 January 2017, available at: <https://www.yihr.rs/bhs/predizborna-kampanja-u-srbiji-najveca-pretnja-miru-u-regionu/>; YIHR Serbia, 1 January 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/inicijativa.mladih/videos/1420245161351365/>

25 Druga promocija Šešeljeve knjige u Beogradu, NVO tražile zabranu [Second Promotion of Šešelj's Book in Belgrade, NGOs Demand Ban], 20 February 2020, available at: <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/30445770.html>, accessed on 30 August 2023.

26 Ratnom zločincu nije mesto na okruglim stolovima [A War Criminal Does Not Belong at Roundtables], YIHR, 7 February 2018, available at: <https://www.yihr.rs/bhs/ratnom-zlocincu-nije-mesto-na-okruglim-stolovima-vlade-republike-srbije/>

27 Ratni zločinci u političkom životu [War Criminals in Political Life], YIHR, 26 December 2017, available at: <http://www.hlc-rdc.org/?p=30815>

28 Jovana Kolarić: Tri korne penal [Three Corner Kicks - Penalty], Nomad, 2 September 2022, available at: <https://nomad.ba/kolaric-tri-korne-penal>

## Ministry of Defence

In April 2014, Novak Đukić, the former commander of the Tactical Group Ozren of the Republic of Srpska Army, received a 20-year prison sentence from the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina for a war crime against civilian population, specifically related to the shelling of the Tuzla Gate on 25 May 1995. A mere two months later, the Serbian Armed Forces permitted the Technical Experimental Centre in Nikinci to be utilised for conducting an experiment titled 'Reconstruction of the Crime at the Tuzla Gate' at the request of Novak Đukić's defence counsel, thus directly supporting the denial of court-established facts and their relativisation.<sup>29</sup>

The Publishing Centre of the Ministry of Defence, Media Centre 'Defence', launched the 'Warrior' edition in 2018, releasing a four-volume war journal authored by Nebojša Pavković, the commander of the Third Army of the Yugoslav Army, who is currently serving a sentence for war crimes committed in Kosovo.<sup>30</sup> Within the same edition, the book 'Priština Corps 1998-1999 – Testimonies of War Commanders' was also published, featuring the memories of Vladimir Lazarević, the commander of Priština Corps, who is also convicted for war crimes. Until October 2019, the Ministry of Defence invested nearly 4 million dinars in this edition.<sup>31</sup> By the end of 2022, the 'Warrior' edition contained ten titles, including the prison notes of Nebojša Pavković from Finland, and a book by Dragoljub Ojdanić, the former Chief of the General Staff of the Yugoslav Army convicted for crimes in Kosovo.<sup>32</sup> The Ministry of Defence organised several book promotions from this edition, during which the officers convicted for war crimes were featured as speakers.<sup>33</sup>

The publishing activity of the Ministry of Defence is complemented by the production of documentary and feature films depicting the armed conflicts of the 1990s. These films adopt the same reductionist and revisionist approach to the events they portray, and they are broadcast on public broadcasting service.<sup>34</sup> Both the Media Centre 'Defence' and the Army Hall regularly provide their spaces as a venue for the revisionist presentation of the past.

## Ministry of the Interior

After Aleksandar Vulin became Minister of the Interior in October 2020, this Ministry also became involved in the new politics of memory, actively participating in the promotion of the so-called 'Serbian world'.

29 Crime in Tuzla's Kapija: Revision of the judicially established facts and putting regional cooperation to the test, HLC, 9 November 2016, available at: <http://www.hlc-rdc.org/?p=32940&lang=de>

30 Edicija Ratnik na Sajmu knjiga ['Warrior' Edition at the Book Fair], 19 October 2018, MOD, available at: <https://www.mod.gov.rs/lat/13186/edicija-ratnik-na-sajmu-knjiga-13186>, accessed on 1 August 2023.

31 Belgrade Book Fair – A place to promote war criminals, HLC, 25 October 2019, available at: <http://www.hlc-rdc.org/?p=37002&lang=de>, accessed on 1 August 2023.

32 See the catalogues of the editions of the MC 'Defence' 2018-2023, available at: <http://www.odbrana.mod.gov.rs/>

33 Belgrade Book Fair – A place to promote war criminals, HLC, 25 October 2019, available at: <http://www.hlc-rdc.org/?p=37002&lang=de>

34 Films 'War Stories from Košare' and 'War Stories from Paštrik' were produced, see: Premijera dokumentarno-igranog filma „Ratne priče sa Košara” [Premiere of the Documentary Feature Film 'War Stories from Košare'], MOD, 9 April 2019, available at: <https://www.mod.gov.rs/lat/13810/premijera-dokumentarno-igranog-filma-ratne-price-sa-kosara-13810>, Premijera dokumentarno-igranog filma „Ratne priče sa Paštrika” [Premiere of the Documentary Feature Film 'War Stories from Paštrik'], MOD, 23 May 2019, available at: <https://www.mod.gov.rs/lat/13979/premijera-dokumentarno-igranog-filma-ratne-price-sa-pastrika-13979>; Dokumentarno-igrani film „Koridor 92” na Prvom programu RTS [Documentary Feature Film 'Corridor 92' at Channel 1 of the Radio Television of Serbia], MOD, 19 January 2021, available at: <https://www.mod.gov.rs/lat/video/16895/dokumentarno-igrani-film-koridor-92-na-prvom-programu-rtss-16895>

In March 2021, the Union of Veterans' Associations of Serbia (SUBOS) awarded Minister Vulin a plaque as a sign of gratitude for his contribution and support to the Union. Among the SUBOS representatives presenting the plaque was Goran Radosavljević Guri, a retired police general who, at the time of the murder of the Bytyqi brothers in 1999, was responsible for Interior Ministry's Teaching Centre in Petrovo Selo.<sup>35</sup> Due to his involvement in the Bytyqi case, Radosavljević has been banned from entering the USA since December 2018. However, three months later, at the celebration of the Day of Gendarmerie on 30 June 2021, the Gendarmerie commander presented a plaque to Radosavljević, acknowledging him as the first commander of that unit.<sup>36</sup>

Minister Vulin uses the recognition of the Srebrenica genocide as a frequent strategy to discredit his political opponents or interlocutors. In mid-2021, responding to the communication from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Montenegro regarding the Resolution on Srebrenica adopted by the Montenegrin Parliament, Vulin stated on the Interior Ministry website, 'To recognise the fake state of Kosovo and give lessons to Serbia about meddling in the internal affairs of Montenegro can only be done by those who came into power on the wave of Serbian resistance and subsequently voted for the Resolution on Srebrenica, which convicts the Serbian people for genocide. If Montenegro cares about better relations with Serbia, it should at least decide to respect the opinion of its citizens of Serbian nationality and not force them to acknowledge the non-existent genocide.'<sup>37</sup>

In early 2022, while advocating for the idea of creating the 'Serbian world', Vulin once again politically leveraged the recognition of the Srebrenica genocide as a tool for disqualification and threat to the Serbian people: 'We Serbs west of the Drina River know what it means when a Serb lives outside of his state, where he does not have his doctor, teacher, police officer; we know how it is when you look at the school curriculum in which you can read that the genocide happened in Srebrenica, that Jasenovac was not a genocide, that Serbs were aggressors on the territory where they were born and have been dwelling for thousands of years'.<sup>38</sup>

The Ministry of the Interior, in collaboration with Radio Television of Serbia, has produced a feature documentary mini-series titled 'Kosovo File'. The first episode, 'Kosovo File '98', was aired in March 2022, followed by the broadcast of the second episode, 'Kosovo File – Račak' in April. Both films portray the events they address in a reductionist manner, and lacking context.<sup>39</sup>

35 Ministar Vulin: Podrška SUBOS-u u svim projektima negovanja tradicije i čuvanja sećanja na žrtve [Minister Vulin: Commitment to Supporting SUBOS in all projects focused on tradition and memory preservation for victims], Ministry of the Interior, 24 March 2021, available at: <https://shorturl.at/fjsT4>, accessed on 22 August 2023.

36 Plaketa Žandarmerije prvom komandantu povezanim sa slučajem Bitići [Gendarmerie's Plaque to the Fist Commander Connected With the Bytyqi Case], RFE, 30 June 2021, available at: <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/31333658.html>, accessed on 22 August 2023.

37 Ministar Vulin: Ako je Crnoj Gori do boljih odnosa sa Srbijom, neka sama odluči da poštuje mišljenje svojih građana srpske nacionalnosti [Minister Vulin: If Montenegro Cares About Better Relations with Serbia, It Should Decide to Respect the Opinion of Its Citizens of Serbian Nationality], Ministry of the Interior, 21 June 2021, available at: <https://shorturl.at/GMTZ8>, accessed on 23 August 2023. In August 2021, Vulin repeated his thesis of 'non-existent genocide in Srebrenica', see: Ministar Vulin: Vlada Crne Gore zaista nije ponizila Srbiju, ne zato što nije htela, već zato što nije mogla [Minister Vulin: Government of Montenegro Did Not Really Humiliate Serbia, Not Because It Didn't Want to, but Because It Couldn't], Ministry of the Interior, 18 August 2021, available at: <https://shorturl.at/bJZ01>, accessed on 23 August 2023.

38 Ministar Vulin: Stvaranje srpskog sveta jedini način da Srbi opstanu u 21. veku [Minister Vulin: Creating the Serbian World Is the Only Way for Serbs to Survive in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century], Ministry of the Interior, 11 January 2022, available at: <https://shorturl.at/cdBL8>, accessed on 23 August 2023.

39 Premijerno prikazan film „Dosije Kosovo – devedeset osma” [Premiere of the film 'Kosovo File – '98'], Radio Television of Serbia, 15 March 2022, available at: <https://www.rts.rs/vesti/drustvo/4740697/premijerno-prikazan-film-dosije-kosovo---devedeset-osma.html>, accessed on 23 August 2023. Slađana Zarić o filmu „Dosije Kosovo – Račak”: Prvi put otvoreno pričamo o Račku [Slađana Zarić About 'Kosovo File – Račak': For the First Time Openly about Račak], Radio Television of Serbia, 19 April 2022, available at: <https://www.rts.rs/magazin/film-i-tv/4783568/racak-bombardovanje-sladjana-zaric-film-premijera.html>, accessed on 23 August 2023.

# Reports

In addition to civil society in Serbia, international organisations and bodies have been warning for years about the escalating practices of relativising and denying war crimes, as well as glorifying war criminals.

In late 2022, Fabian Salvioli, the UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence, visited Serbia. During a conference held in early December, Mr Salvioli expressed heightened concern about the glorification of war criminals, denial and relativisation of war crimes, and judgments related to war crimes. He noted his amazement at the abundance of murals and graffiti dedicated to war criminals, which authorities fail to remove, despite regulatory violations. This inaction sends a message to the public that such practices are tacitly supported.<sup>40</sup>

In the 2022 progress report on Serbia, the European Commission emphasised the imperative for Serbia to collaborate with the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, including the full acknowledgment and enforcement of its judgments and decisions. The European Commission highlighted concerns that Serbia continues to publicly disputes judgments, with some politicians going so far as to deny the Srebrenica genocide without facing consequences.<sup>41</sup>

Upon the adoption of the 2022 report by the European Commission, the European Parliament passed a resolution reiterating its condemnation of the widespread denials of international verdicts on war crimes. The resolution underscored that Serbia, as a candidate country, should not tolerate the denial of the Srebrenica genocide or the glorification of war criminals. Once again, the resolution expressed regret regarding the support and public spaces provided for convicted war criminals who are close to the ruling party.<sup>42</sup>

In December 2022, addressing the UN Security Council, Serge Brammertz, Prosecutor of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, voiced his concern about the continuing denial of war crimes and the glorification of convicted war criminals in the countries of former Yugoslavia. He highlighted as a worrying trend the social acceptance of the atmosphere of denial fostered by political leaders. Illustrating this with the example of over 150 murals of Ratko Mladić in Belgrade alone, he underscored that the denial has become part of the political and cultural mainstream.<sup>43</sup>

In its annual report, Amnesty International stated that in 2022, Serbia continued to promote and honour convicted war criminals, while failing to prosecute high-ranking military and police officials.<sup>44</sup>

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40 Preliminary Observations from the Official Visit to Serbia and Kosovo (22 November to 2 December 2022), Special Rapporteur on the Promotion of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Guarantees of Non-Recurrence, Fabian Salvioli.

41 European Commission, Serbia 2022 Report, available at: <https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-10/Serbia%20Report%202022.pdf>

42 European Parliament resolution of 10 May 2023 on the 2022 Commission Report on Serbia (2022/2204(INI))

43 Prosecutor Brammertz's Address to the UN Security Council, 12 December 2022, available at: <https://www.irmct.org/en/news/prosecutor-brammertzs-address-un-security-council-1>

44 Amnesty International Report 2022/23: The state of the world's human rights, available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/pol10/5670/2023/en/>

In early August 2023, the Memorial Centre Srebrenica released a report on the denial of the Srebrenica genocide during the one-year period between May 2022 and May 2023. One of the report's findings is that the intensity of the debate surrounding the Srebrenica genocide diminished, leading to corresponding decline in denial. The authors attribute this shift to the authorities redirecting their focus to the situation in Kosovo and ongoing protests. At the same time, the report highlights an escalation in hate speech directed towards Kosovo Albanians.<sup>45</sup>

## Methodological Framework

The first annual report of the Youth Initiative for Human Rights on the denial of war crimes and other human rights violations during the wars in the former Yugoslavia methodologically relies on the analysis of statements made by political officials and other individuals. The analysis is complemented by an examination of official communications from institutions and media articles.

With regard to the source of denial and who expresses denial, we can distinguish between institutional and extra-institutional denial.

Institutional denial in Serbia is rooted in the state policy of remembrance, characterised by historical revisionism, denial, and relativisation of committed crimes and the associated responsibility for them.

Extra-institutional denial is notably prevalent in the media, with both media entities themselves and various right-wing and/or extremist groups and/or individuals serving as its proponents. These individuals often include esteemed members of society, university professors, retired army officers, as well as quasi-scientists and pseudo-experts. Notably, individuals convicted of war crimes and those under suspicion for such crimes are also proponents of extra-institutional denial. However, extra-institutional denial does not occur in a social vacuum. It is sustained by the institutions of the Republic of Serbia, primarily through the political construction of reality, in which the relativisation and denial of facts and events from the past are considered legitimate. Denial is not only tolerated and approved but, in many instances, it is also financially supported.

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45 Izveštaj o negiranju genocida u Srebrenici 2023, Memorial Centre Srebrenica, July 2023, pp. 4, 11, 25, 41, available at: <https://srebrenicamemorial.org/bs/aktuelnosti/izvjestaj-o-negiranju-genocida-u-srebrenici-2023/113>

This report identifies three strategies of denial<sup>46</sup> that are used in public discourse – literal denial, interpretative denial, and implicatory denial. These strategies are often intertwined and employed simultaneously. In situations where literal denial confronts irrefutable evidence, it does not disappear, but rather transforms into legalistic reinterpretation or political justification.

- Literal denial entails asserting that something did not happen or is not true. Since literal denial is challenging to sustain in situations when there is a substantial body of evidence and well-established court facts regarding war crimes, this strategy is employed relatively rarely.
- Interpretative denial involves acknowledging that something has happened, while disputing the legal characterisation of the event as it is considered too stern and too harsh, inadequate to the reality as we perceive it. This denial strategy is dominant concerning denial in Serbia, especially with regard to the denial of the Srebrenica genocide. A key tactic within this strategy is the use of euphemisms to discuss the topic. The aim is to reject and downplay the legal and commonly accepted interpretation of events, despite purported acknowledgment of harm. Legalism is also a tool used within this strategy, expressed as an assertion that certain actions are not possible due to existing laws that criminalise them, followed by a denial or minimisation of one's own responsibility.
- Implicatory denial is a form of simplified rationalisation. It does not involve the outright refusal that something happened, but rather the denial of the implications of such an event. This strategy is used to sidestep certain moral or psychological demands, acknowledging that a war crime occurred, but with reservations such as 'it has nothing to do with me' or 'it doesn't concern me'. Implicatory denial also incorporates the relativisation of events. In this strategy, responsibility is shifted to the victim, while contextualisation is often achieved by referencing history, which is used as a justification for the event.

## State of Denial 2022

The most frequently denied crime in 2022 was Račak. Denial encompasses the event itself, questioning its occurrence, and challenging the status and number of victims, as well as the investigation conducted after the event. Further, the reasons for which the ICTY Prosecutor's Office excluded Račak from the indictment are the subject of manipulation. The event is often presented in isolation, as a trigger for the commencement of bombing, without contextualising it within the broader armed conflict of 1998. Račak denial involves representatives of the government and institutions, media, retired army and police generals, as well as participants and witnesses of the event.

At the beginning of the year, a series of incidents unfolded in Priboj. On the second day of January, Marko Pantović, a member of the Priboj Police Department, posted a video on his Facebook wall capturing a private celebration where several police officers were singing 'Srebrenica, you are dear to me, dear God give us three more of thee', 'Hey Pazar - new Vukovar; hey Sjenica - new Srebrenica',

<sup>46</sup> 'States of Denial', Stanley Cohen, Samizdat B92, 2003.

'Hey Fathima, where are your shalvars, they are kept by Chetniks near Ledenik'. The following day, the involved police officers apologised to their fellow citizens.<sup>47</sup> The Youth Initiative for Human Rights called for the initiation of proceedings against the police officers,<sup>48</sup> while Interior Minister Aleksandar Vulin announced on 5 January that disciplinary actions had been initiated. Subsequently, on the night of 6-7 January, a group of youngsters in Priboj were heard singing 'It's Christmas, it's Christmas, shoot at mosques', while writings appeared on the facades 'Ratko Mladić Hero' and 'From Priboj to The Hague, everybody is sided with Ratko the General'.<sup>49</sup> By 10 January, the Interior Ministry announced disciplinary proceedings against 12 members of the Border Police Directorate in Priboj 'whose inappropriate behaviour outside of service was insulting for citizens of other religions and nationalities'.<sup>50</sup> Two days later, the President of Serbia visited Priboj, stating that the police officers 'will not only be punished, but they will also be removed from Priboj. There are not only disciplinary proceedings against them, but the prosecutor is working on their cases, as well'.<sup>51</sup> However, the public was not subsequently informed about the progress of these proceedings.

In April 2022, the Congress Hall of the Serbian Army House hosted the promotion of a book by Dragoljub Ojdanić, an army general and former Chief of the General Staff of the Serbian Armed Forces, who had been sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment by the ICTY for aiding and abetting crimes against humanity in Kosovo. Ojdanić passed away in September 2020<sup>52</sup>, and his book titled 'Directing Humanitarian Catastrophe – Temporary Departure of Albanians from Kosovo and Metohija in 1999' was published by the Defence Ministry's Media Centre 'Defence' as part of the 'Warrior' edition. Among the guests at the book promotion was Nikola Šainović, a former Deputy Prime Minister of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia who had been convicted for war crimes in Kosovo.<sup>53</sup>

47 Zastrašujuće – Policajci u Priboju se vesele uz „Oj, Pazaru, novi Vukovaru, oj, Sjenice, nova Srebrenice [Scary – Police Officers in Priboj Celebrate with 'Hey Pazar - new Vukovar, hey Sjenica - New Srebrenica], SandžakPress, 2 January 2022, available at: <https://sandzakpress.net/zastrasujuce-policajci-u-priboju-se-veseli-uz-oj-pazaru-novi-vukovaru--sjenice-nova-srebrenice-video/>, accessed on 10 September 2023. Jedan od policajaca se izvinio zbog uvredljivih pesama na proslavi u Priboju [One of the Police Officers Apologised for the Insulting Songs at the Celebration in Priboj], N1, 3 January 2022, available at: <https://n1info.rs/vesti/jedan-od-policajaca-se-izvinio-zbog-uvredljivih-pesama-na-proslavi-u-priboju/>, accessed on 10 September 2023.

48 Tužilaštvo i MUP da utvrde ko su osobe koje su pevale u slavu genocida i ratnih zločina i kazni ih u skladu sa zakonom [Prosecutor's Office and Interior Minister to Identify Who Were the Persons Singing in Celebration of Genocide and War Crimes, and Punish Them in Accordance with the Law], YIHR, 3 January 2022, available at: <https://www.yihr.rs/bhs/tuzilastvo-i-mup-da-kazne-osobe-koje-pevaju-u-slavu-genocida-i-ratnih-zlocina/>

49 Božić je, pucaj u džamije – u Priboju nastavljani izlivi fašizma [It's Christmas, Shoot at Mosques – the Outpouring of Fascism in Priboj Continues], SandžakPress, 8 January 2022, available at: <https://sandzakpress.net/bozic-je-pucaju-dzamiye-u-priboju-nastavljeni-izlivi-fasizma-video/>, accessed on 10 September 2023.

50 Protiv učesnika u incidentu u Priboju pokrenut je disciplinski postupak [Disciplinary Proceedings Initiated against Participants of the Incident in Priboj], Ministry of the Interior, 10 January 2022, available at: <https://shorturl.at/flovx>, accessed on 10 September 2023.

51 Vučić o nacionalističkim ispadima u Priboju: Država neće imati milosti [Vučić About Nationalist Incidents in Priboj: The State Will Have No Mercy], Al Jazeera, 12 January 2022, available at: <https://balkans.aljazeera.net/news/balkan/2022/1/12/vucic-danas-u-posjeti-priboju-nakon-nacionalistickih-ispada-u-tom-gradu>, accessed on 10 September 2023.

52 Dragoljub Ojdanić died on 6 September 2020 at the Military Medical Academy. The Ministry of Defence informed the public of his death on its website, citing biographical data, but omitting the data about the ICTY judgment. See at: Preminuo general armije u penziji Dragoljub Ojdanić [Retired Army General Dragoljub Ojdanić Passed Away], MOD, 6 September 2020, available at: <https://www.mod.gov.rs/lat/16448/preminuo-general-armije-u-penziji-dragoljub-ojdanic-16448>, accessed on 5 August 2023. A few days later, commemoration was held at the Guard House in Topčider. See at: Komemoracija povodom smrti generala armije u penziji Dragoljuba Ojdanića [Commemoration in Remembrance of the Passing of Retired Army General Dragoljub Ojdanić], MOD, 10 September 2020, available at: <https://www.mod.gov.rs/lat/16464/komemoracija-povodom-smrti-general-a-armije-u-penziji-dragoljuba-ojdanica-16464>, accessed on 5 August 2020.

53 Promocija knjige „Režiranje humanitarne katastrofe – Privremen odlazak Albanaca s Kosova i Metohije 1999. godine” [Book Promotion 'Directing Humanitarian Catastrophe – Temporary Departure of Albanians from Kosovo and Metohija in 1999], Odbrana, 19 April 2022, available at: [http://www.odbrana.mod.gov.rs/sadrzaj.php?id\\_sadrzaja=2442](http://www.odbrana.mod.gov.rs/sadrzaj.php?id_sadrzaja=2442), accessed on 21 July 2023. Podrškom ratnim zločincima Ministarstvo odbrane radi protiv mira i stabilnosti u region [By Supporting War Criminals, Ministry of Defence Is Working against Peace and Stability], YIHR, 19 April 2022, available at: <https://www.yihr.rs/bhs/podrskom-ratnim-zlocincima-ministarstvo-odbrane-radi-protiv-mira-i-stabilnosti-u-regionu/>



On the anniversary of the end of the NATO bombing in June 2022, a roundtable organised by the Belgrade Forum for the World of Equal and the Club of the Generals and Admirals of Serbia took place at the Army Home. During the event, the 'imposed war' thesis was reiterated, without addressing the events in Kosovo that had preceded the bombing.<sup>54</sup>

At the initiative of the citizens' association 'Heroic 549th Motorised Brigade Tzar Dušan the Mighty' and with support of the Defence Ministry and Serbian Armed Forces, a memorial plaque dedicated to the members of the Army and Police who died in Kosovo in 1998 and 1999 in the zone of responsibility of the 549th Motorised Brigade was installed in June 2022 at the Leskovac-based Barracks 'Duke Petar Bojović'. Božidar Delić, a military commander of the 549th motorised brigade, unveiled the memorial plaque.<sup>55</sup> The zone of responsibility of the 549th Motorised Brigade included the municipalities of Prizren, Đakovica, Orahovac and Suva Reka, where more than 2100 Kosovo Albanian civilians were killed.<sup>56</sup> The Humanitarian Law Centre has filed criminal reports against Božidar Delić, the commander of the 549th Motorised Brigade, for crimes in the villages of Trnje and Landovica.<sup>57</sup> For the crime in the village of Trnje, Rajko Kozlina, a member of the Rear Battalion of the 549th Motorised Brigade, was sentenced to 15 years of imprisonment by the Higher Court in Belgrade. Since October 2020, Kozlina has been on the run.<sup>58</sup>

## Political and Media Use of the Perpetrators

In March 2022, General Vladimir Lazarević attended a gathering of the Movement of Socialists in Knjaževac to mark the formation of a local committee of this party. Aleksandar Vulin, the leader of the Movement of Socialists and the Interior Minister at the time, expressed gratitude to Lazarević for his presence. Vulin emphasised his pride in standing 'in front of General Lazarević, the greatest living Serbian soldier. He said that those who dedicated their officer careers to serving the NATO Pact could not even look General Lazarević in the eye, while they have the right and privilege of standing alongside him and of saying that this country gave birth to Lazarević and not Ponošs'.<sup>59</sup>

54 Okrugli sto o Kumanovskom sporazumu [Roundtable on the Kumanovo Agreement], MC Defence, 9 June 2022, available at: [http://www.odbrana.mod.gov.rs/sadrzaj.php?id\\_sadrzaja=2465](http://www.odbrana.mod.gov.rs/sadrzaj.php?id_sadrzaja=2465), accessed on 25 July 2023.

55 U Leskovcu otkriveno spomen-obeležje poginulim pripadnicima Vojske i Policije 1998. i 1999. godine [Memorial Plaque Dedicated to Members of the Army and Police Killed in 1998 and 1999 Unveiled in Leskovac], MOD, 4 June 2022, available at: <https://www.mod.gov.rs/cir/18875/u-leskovcu-otkriveno-spomen-obelezje-poginulim-pripadnicima-vojske-i-policije-1998-i-1999-godine-18875>, accessed on 8 August 2023.

56 Dossier: 549th Motorised Brigade of Yugoslav Army, HLC, March 2013, available at: <https://www.hlc-rdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Dossier-549th-Motorized-Brigade-of-Yugoslav-Army.pdf>

57 Istražiti umešanost Božidara Delića i Svetozara Andrića u ratne zločine [Investigate the Involvement of Božidar Delić and Svetozar Andrić in War Crimes], HLC, 19 August 2022, available at: <http://www.hlc-rdc.org/?p=38512>

58 Osuđenom ratnom zločincu Rajku Kozlini mesto je u zatvoru, ne u Vojsci Srbije [Convicted War Criminal Rajko Kozlina Belongs to Prison, not to Serbian Armed Forces], YIHR, 11 November 2020, available at: <https://www.yihr.rs/bhs/osudenom-ratnom-zlocincu-kozlini-mesto-je-u-zatvoru-ne-u-vojsci-srbije/>

59 Predsednik Pokreta socijalista Aleksandar Vulin poručio sa skupa svoje partije u Knjaževcu: Pobjeda koja je pred Vučićem je pobjeda svakog Srbina gde god da živi [President of the Movement of Socialists Aleksandar Vulin Said at His Party Gathering in Knjaževac: The Victory in Front of Vučić is the Victory of Every Serb Wherever They Live], Knjaževačke novine, 9 March 2022, available at: <https://knjazevacke.rs/2022/03/09/vesti/predsednik-pokreta-socijalista-aleksandar-vulin-porucio-sa-skupa-svoje-partije-u-knjazevcu-pobeda-koja-je-pred-vucicem-je-pobeda-svakog-srbina-gde-god-da-zivi/>, accessed on 31 July 2023.

During the same gathering, Lazarević said, 'through our efforts in synergy with all segments of society that hold Serbia dear, we are striving to ensure that we are not ashamed of our past'. He further stated, 'Utilizing diplomatic, political, legal, and scientific means, let us vehemently oppose any revision of our freedom-loving history that could be detrimental to the Serbian people, because our past serves as our code, identity, and destiny'.<sup>60</sup>

A few days later, Minister Vulin participated in a ceremony celebrating the Day of the Srebrenica Municipality. Throughout the event, he was seated in the same row as Saša Cvjetan, a member of the 'Scorpions' paramilitary unit. Cvjetan had been sentenced in 2005 to a 20 years' imprisonment for the war crime against Albanian civilians during the war in Kosovo.<sup>61</sup>

On the 23rd anniversary of the commencement of the NATO bombing, the Club of the Generals and Admirals of Serbia – Niš branch, in collaboration with the Command of the Land Forces, Nišava Administrative Region, and local associations in Niš, organised a gathering titled 'Lest We Forget' at the National Theatre in Niš. Vladimir Lazarević was among the speakers at the event.<sup>62</sup>

In August 2022, Svetozar Andrić, a former commander of the 1st Birčanska Light Infantry Brigade, against whom the HLC filed a criminal report with the War Crimes Prosecutor's Office, was elected as a member of the Belgrade City Council. Andrić was a member of the Serbian Patriotic Alliance (SPAS), the party of the current Belgrade Mayor Aleksandar Šapić, until May 2021, when the party dissolved, and its membership, including Andrić, collectively joined the governing Serbian Progressive Party. Between 2016 and 2020, Andrić served as the Deputy President of the Novi Beograd municipality. From 2020 to 2022, he was a Member of Parliament. For several years, the HLC had been urging an investigation against Andrić for his involvement in the establishment of the Sušica camp, where over 150 prisoners were killed, as well as in the persecution and destruction of property belonging to Bosniaks from Zvornik, Vlasenica and Kalesija.<sup>63</sup>

In early September 2022, Belgrade Mayor Aleksandar Šapić shared a photo on his Facebook wall featuring Veselin Šljivančanin, accompanied by the message 'A photo that has been the cause of attacks from various quarters for the past ten years. Here is a new one, ready to serve as material for the next ten years. Once again with Veselin Šljivančanin'.<sup>64</sup>

60 Predsednik Pokreta socijalista Aleksandar Vulin poručio sa skupa svoje partije u Knjaževcu: Pobjeda koja je pred Vučićem je pobjeda svakog Srbina gde god da živi [President of the Movement of Socialists Aleksandar Vulin Said at His Party Gathering in Knjaževac: The Victory in Front of Vučić is the Victory of Every Serb Wherever They Live], Knjaževačke novine, 9 March 2022, available at: <https://knjazevacke.rs/2022/03/09/vesti/predsednik-pokreta-socijalista-aleksandar-vulin-porucio-sa-skupa-svoje-partije-u-knjazevcu-pobjeda-koja-je-pred-vucicem-je-pobjeda-svakog-srbina-gde-god-da-zivi/>, accessed on 31 July 2023.

61 Minister Vulin continuously in the company of war crime convicts, HLC, 29 March 2023, available at: <http://www.hlc-rdc.org/?p=38406&lang=de>, accessed on 31 July 2023.

62 General Lazarević, govoreći u čast i slavu junacima, održao čas istorije [General Lazarević, Speaking in Honour of the Heroes, Held a History Class], Niške vesti, 23 March 2022, available at: <https://niskevesti.rs/general-lazarevic-govoreci-u-cast-i-slavu-junacima-odrzao-cas-istorije/>, accessed on 6 August 2023.

63 HLC Demands Investigation on Svetozar Andrić and Tomo Kovač, HLC, 3 February 2006, available at: <http://www.hlc-rdc.org/?p=13587&lang=de>; Criminal Complaint against Andrić, HLC, 2 March 2018, available at: <http://www.hlc-rdc.org/?p=34855&lang=de>; Istražiti umešanost Božidara Delića i Svetozara Andrića u ratne zločine [Investigate Involvement of Božidar Delić and Svetozar Andrić in War Crimes], HLC, 19 August 2022, available at: <http://www.hlc-rdc.org/?p=38512>; Odnos prema ratnim zločinima u izbornoj kampanji 2022. godine [Attitude towards War Crimes in the 2022 Election Campaign], YIHR, March 2022.

64 Šapić se slikao sa ratnim zločincem i poručio: Evo da možete da me napadate [Šapić Took Photo with a War Criminal and Said: Here It Is So You Can Attack Me], Nova.rs, 8 September 2022, available at: <https://nova.rs/vesti/politika/sapic-se-slikao-sa-ratnim-zlocincem-i-porucio-evo-da-mozete-da-me-napadate/>, accessed on 21 July 2023.

In October 2022, the Eparchy of Vranje awarded Vladimir Lazarević<sup>65</sup> the Medal of Saint Surdulica Martyrs for his contribution to 'nurturing national and cultural values (spiritual and material), as well as for fostering humanity and brotherhood'.<sup>66</sup>

## Chroniclers and Analysts

*'I mainly appear in the media as a chronicler and analyst, focusing on historical and political topics. I especially delve into the period just before the 1999 war and the Kosovo issue. During that time, as a Federal Deputy Prime Minister responsible for foreign policy, I was involved in negotiations, actively participating in everything. It is important to me that people are aware and remember not to have false images and narratives about what had happened. Because negotiations about Kosovo are not finished; they are still ongoing today. While the subjects of negotiations may differ personally, the main topic remains the same'. – Nikola Šainović, Večernje novosti, 26 February 2022<sup>67</sup>*

In Serbia, individuals who have committed war crimes regularly serve as experts in martial law and military strategy, while their involvement in war crimes is not only ignored, but it is actually used as evidence of their expertise in the topic. In the analysis of the current political situation, especially concerning Kosovo, one of the most prominent figures is Vladimir Lazarević, a general and former commander of the Priština Corps of the Yugoslav Army, convicted by the ICTY for aiding and abetting crimes against humanity during the Kosovo war.<sup>68</sup> With the beginning of the Russian aggression in Ukraine, these individuals often analyse the developments there. Among the most active in that respect are Vinko Pandurević, a colonel and commander of the Zvornik Brigade of the Drina Corps of the Republic of Srpska Army, convicted for crimes committed in Srebrenica; Veselin Šljivančanin, a security officer of the 1st Guard Motorised Brigade of the Yugoslav People's Army, convicted for crimes in Vukovar and Nikola Šainović, a former Deputy Prime Minister of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia convicted for crimes committed in Kosovo.

**Veselin Šljivančanin** – former major of the Yugoslav People's Army, convicted by the ICTY for aiding and abetting the torture of prisoners in Ovčara, currently member of the Main Board of the Serbian Progressive Party. –

During 2022, Šljivančanin made appearances on several TV shows where he discussed the situation in Kosovo and the war in Ukraine.

65 Pahomije odlikovao haškog osuđenika Vladimira Lazarevića [Pahomije Decorated the Hague Convict Vladimir Lazarević], Južne vesti, 11 October 2022, available at: <https://www.juznevesti.com/Drushtvo/Pahomije-odlikovao-haskog-osudjenika-Vladimira-Lazarevica.sr.html>, accessed on 21 July 2023.

66 Decorations by the Orthodox Eparchy of Vranje, available at: <https://www.eparhijavranjska.org/Newsview.asp?ID=2388>, accessed on 21 July 2023.

67 Unuka Marta pre politike: Nikola Šainović u penziju otišao iz haške ćelije, vratio se partiji, bez ambicija [Granddaughter Marta before Politics: Nikola Šainović Retired from The Hague Cell, Returned to the Party, Without Ambitions], Večernje novosti, 26 February 2022, available at: <https://www.novosti.rs/c/drustvo/vesti/1089636/unuka-marta-pre-politike-nikola-sainovic-penziju-otisao-haske-celije-vratio-partiji-bez-ambicija>, accessed on 8 August 2023.

68 In 2015, having served 2/3 of his sentence, Vladimir Lazarević was released from prison. He returned to Serbia by the plane of the Government of Serbia, accompanied by the then Defence Minister Bratislav Gašić and Justice Minister Nikola Selaković. At the celebration in Niš, he was welcomed by Aleksandar Vulin, Minister of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Issues, and Ljubiša Diković, Chief of Staff of the Serbian Armed Forces. Victims Mocked by Government Reception for Lazarević, HLC, 4 December 2015, available at: <http://www.hlc-rdc.org/?p=30815&lang=de>, accessed on 5 August 2023. Since his return to Serbia, Lazarević has been treated as a hero: he has been engaged as lecturer at the Military Academy, he received several national and local decorations and awards. See: YIHR Statement to Vladimir Lazarević receiving Local Honor in Serbia, YIHR, 6 August 2021, available at: <https://yihhr.rs/en/yihr-statement-to-vladimir-lazarevic-receiving-local-honor-in-serbia/>. Lazarević na Vojnoj akademiji – nedopustiva rehabilitacija ratnih zločinaca [Lazarević at Military Academy – Unacceptable Rehabilitation of War Criminals], YUCOM, 18 October 2017, available at: <https://www.yucom.org.rs/lazarevic-na-vojnoj-akademiji-nedopustiva-rehabilitacija-ratnih-zlocinaca/>, accessed on 3 August 2023.

As a guest on the pro-regime Happy TV, he said, ‘We were saving people from basements. I provided a vehicle for the daughter of a Croatian army commander to drive her, and people would come to me to whisper whose daughter she was. I was not interested in that; I did everything to help her. She was intentionally wounded to show the Yugoslav People’s Army as committing crimes against civilians. We did everything to prevent civilian casualties.’<sup>69</sup>

**Božidar Delić** – *Former commander of the 549th Motorised Brigade of the Yugoslav Army. The zone of responsibility of the 549th Motorised Brigade included municipalities of Prizren, Đakovica, Orahovac and Suva Reka. Over 2100 Albanian civilians were killed there during the conflict. The Humanitarian Law Centre filed two criminal reports against Delić to the War Crimes Prosecutor’s Office for the crimes in the villages of Trnje and Landovica in March 1999*<sup>70</sup> -

In early 2022, Božidar Delić publicly announced his departure from the movement ‘Love, Faith, Hope’ and declared the establishment of the ‘There is no Going Back – Serbia is Behind’ movement. In the parliamentary elections in early April, Delić served as the list holder for Dr Miloš Jovanović – HOPE for Serbia. During the constitutional session of the Serbian Parliament held in early August 2022, Delić was elected as the Vice Chairperson of the Parliament.<sup>71</sup>

In response to criticism from the civil society with regard to Delić’s election as Vice Chairperson of the Parliament, the ‘There is no Going Back – Serbia is Behind’ movement organised a conference in mid-August. The movement stated that the conference was organised ‘in response to Priština’s accusations that the 549th Motorised Brigade of the Yugoslav Army, under the command of General Božidar Delić, committed war crimes in Kosovo and Metohija in 1998/99, for the purpose of pressuring official Belgrade before the upcoming negotiations in Brussels’, thus presenting the protection of Delić as a matter of national interest.<sup>72</sup> The conference focused on the topics of ‘high professionalism and efficiency’ and ‘upholding martial law and provisions of the Geneva Convention’ by the brigade under Delić’s command.<sup>73</sup>

Božidar Delić passed away on 23 August 2022. On that occasion, commemoration was organised at the National Assembly on 29 August to pay respects to Delić.<sup>74</sup> In the September issue of the ‘Odbrana’ magazine, published by the Defence Ministry, a testimony of

69 Veselin Šljivančanin za TV Happy: Zelenski nije dorastao zadatku! Umesto što traži pomoć od NATO, nek očuva mir kod svog Naroda [Veselin Šljivančanin for TV Happy: Zelenski Is Not up to the Task! Instead of Seeking Help From the NATO, He Should Preserve Peace Among His People], Happy TV, 8 March 2022, available at: <https://happytv.rs/vesti/politika/veselin-sljivancanin-za-tv-happy-zelenski-nije-dorastao-zadatku-umesto-sto-trazi-pomoc-od-nato-nek-ocuva-mir-kod-svog-naroda/67882/>, accessed on 23 August 2023.

70 On crimes committed in the zone of responsibility of the 549th Motorised Brigade, see: Dossier: 549th Motorised Brigade of Yugoslav Army, HLC, March 2013, available at: <https://www.hlc-rdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Dossier-549th-Motorized-Brigade-of-Yugoslav-Army.pdf>. Istražiti umešanost Božidara Delića i Svetozara Andrića u ratne zločine [Investigate Involvement of Božidar Delić and Svetozar Andrić in War Crimes], HLC, 19 August 2022, available at: <http://www.hlc-rdc.org/?p=38512>

71 Decision on the number and election of Vice Chairperson of the National Assembly, National Assembly of Serbia, 2 August 2022, available at: [http://www.parlament.gov.rs/upload/archive/files/lat/pdf/ostala\\_akta/13\\_saziv/RS13-22%20lat..pdf](http://www.parlament.gov.rs/upload/archive/files/lat/pdf/ostala_akta/13_saziv/RS13-22%20lat..pdf)

72 Konferencija za novinare parlamentarnog patriotskog pokreta Nema nazad – iza je Srbija [Press Conference by the Parliamentary Patriotic Movement ‘There is no Going Back – Serbia is Behind’], Media Centre Beograd, 18 August 2022, available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TTj454Vkfdk>, accessed on 7 August 2023.

73 Pozivanje na odgovornost jedini je način za borbu protiv nekažnjivosti [Calling for Responsibility as the Only Way to Fight Impunity], YIHR, 18 August 2022, available at: <https://www.yihr.rs/bhs/pozivanje-na-odgovornost-jedini-je-nacin-za-borbu-protiv-nekaznjivosti/>

74 Commemoration of deceased Vice Chairperson of the National Assembly, General-Major Božidar Delić, available at: <http://217.26.67.44/filesnsrs/ostalo/ostalo2022082911.mp4>

Božidar Delić from his book 'Battle for Paštrik – Memories of the Participants', published within the 'Warrior' edition, was printed.<sup>75</sup>

**Tomislav Tomo Kovač** – *Former Commander of the Staff of the Police Forces of the Interior Ministry of the Republic of Srpska, Deputy Minister and then Minister of the Interior of the Republic of Srpska. The Prosecution Office of Bosnia and Herzegovina issued an indictment against Kovač for the Srebrenica genocide in January 2018.*<sup>76</sup> –

Tomislav Kovač is a frequent guest on the TV shows where he analyses the current political situation and provides his perspective on the war, always characterised by relativisation and denial. In the show 'Crime Column' on Kurir Television on 13 December 2022, Kovač claimed that the decision to kill 'prisoners of war' in Srebrenica was made by the 'military intelligence service headed by colonels Beara and Popović, and they did that regardless of the decision of the General Headquarters'. In the same show, he stated, 'Serbian forces shot and killed around 2500 persons.' 'Around one thousand persons killed each other in that - Muslims - in that movement. Some five hundred were killed somewhere in fights. Thus, this is a total of somewhere in between 3500 and 4000.'<sup>77</sup>

**Momir Stojanović** – *Former head of the Security Administration of the Priština Corps of the Yugoslav Army. In the ICTY judgments, Stojanović was recognised as one of the organisers of the military-police action 'Reka', during which the largest crime against civilians occurred in the Kosovo war. In the village of Meja and its vicinity on 27 April 1999, members of the Serbian forces singled out more than 250 men aged 14 to 80, who were subsequently killed in several locations. The remains of 249 victims were found in a mass grave in Batajnica. In February 2015, at the request of the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), Interpol issued a wanted note for Stojanović for crimes committed in the 'Operation Reka'.*<sup>78</sup> –

After leaving the Serbian Progressive Party in 2016, Momir Stojanović became a regular guest on media outlets critical of the governing coalition. Despite his frequent media appearances, Stojanović has never been asked about his role in the crimes committed during the 'Operation Reka'.

During 2022, Stojanović appeared in various media 25 times, where he was presented as a 'professional'. He commented on the state

75 Onaj koji je bio tu – na braniku Srbije [The One Who Was There – In the Defence of Serbia], Odbrana no. 364, September 2022, available at: [http://www.odbrana.mod.gov.rs/grab\\_file.php?id\\_clanka=9361&redni\\_broj=364&putanja=Odbrana364-str48-51.pdf&id\\_casopisa=1](http://www.odbrana.mod.gov.rs/grab_file.php?id_clanka=9361&redni_broj=364&putanja=Odbrana364-str48-51.pdf&id_casopisa=1);

76 S1 1 K 027292 18 Kri Tomislav Kovač, Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, <https://sudbih.gov.ba/Court/Case/1176>; Since 2006, the HLC has been demanding that the War Crimes Prosecutor's Office initiate an investigation on Tomislav Kovač, see: HLC Demands Investigation on Svetozar Andrić and Tomo Kovač, HLC, 3 February 2006, available at: <http://www.hlc-rdc.org/?p=13587&lang=de>

77 Crna hronika, Kurir televizija, 13 December 2022, available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pKlLzLj4hnTK>, accessed on 8 August 2023.

78 After the war in Kosovo, Stojanović was the head of the Operational Department of the Command of the Priština Corps of the Third Army of the Armed Forces of Serbia and Montenegro, head of the Security Administration of the Armed Forces of Serbia and Montenegro, and director of the Military Intelligence Agency. He has been politically active since 2007 as a member of the Serbian Radical Party, Socialist Party of Serbia, and Serbian Progressive Party. For evidence on the Momir Stojanović's role in the 'Operation Reka', see: 'Operation Reka' Dossier, HLC, October 2015, available at: [https://www.hlc-rdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Dossier-Operation\\_Reka.pdf](https://www.hlc-rdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Dossier-Operation_Reka.pdf)

of affairs within the governing party<sup>79</sup>, the political and security situation in the country,<sup>80</sup> and relations with Kosovo.<sup>81</sup> In the 2022 election campaign, Momir Stojanović supported the presidential candidate Zdravko Ponoš.<sup>82</sup>

## Participation in Election Campaign

The Youth Initiative for Human Rights, monitoring the election campaign in April 2022, observed that a nationalist narrative prevailed in the political discourse, accompanied by the denial of established court facts about war crimes and warmongering rhetoric. Notably, individuals convicted of war crimes participated in the election campaign as candidates, political analysts, and sympathisers of specific political options.<sup>83</sup>

Six convicted war criminals, namely Vojislav Šešelj, Vladimir Lazarević, Veselin Šljivančanin, Nikola Šainović, Dragan Vasiljković, and Vinko Pandurević, supported the lists and candidates of the governing coalition consisting of Serbian Progressive party – Socialist Party of Serbia during the elections. Additionally, Vojislav Šešelj served as the list holder for the Serbian Radical Party in the parliamentary election.

The denial of the Srebrenica genocide was a prevalent stance among the election lists and candidates in the April elections. Representatives from the Serbian Radical Party, the HOPE coalition, Sovereignists, Oathkeepers ('Zavetnici'), and 'Dveri', as well as presidential candidates Miloš Jovanović, Boško Obradović, Miša Vacić, and Milica Đurđević-Stamenkovski, used a literal denial strategy.

The Serbian Progressive Party, along with the Socialist Party of Serbia, adopted interpretative and implicatory denial strategies

79 „Poslušan do neprijatnosti, snishodljiv po službenoj dužnosti”: Kako tumačiti izjavu Vučevića da je više pomogao SNS-u od ostalih kolega iz Vlade [‘Obedient to the Extent of Inconvenience, Condescending Ex Officio’: How to Interpret Vučević’s Statement That He Helped the Serbian Progressive Party More Than Other Colleagues from the Government], Danas, 30 October 2022, available at: <https://www.danas.rs/vesti/politika/poslusan-do-neprijatnosti-snishodljiv-po-sluzbenoj-duznosti-kako-tumaciti-izjavu-vucevica-da-je-vise-pomogao-sns-u-od-ostalih-kolega-iz-vlade/>, accessed on 7 August 2023.

80 Zašto je sporan izbor Vulina za direktora BIA? [Why Is Vulin’s Appointment as BIA Director Controversial?], Danas, 3 December 2022, available: <https://www.danas.rs/vesti/drustvo/zasto-je-sporan-izbor-vulina-za-direktora-bia-niti-je-strucan-niti-kvalifikovan-poprilicno-kompromitovan/>, accessed on 7 August 2023. Odakle dolaze dojave o bombama u Srbiji [Where Do Bomb Threats in Serbia Come From?], Danas, 22 April 2022, available at: <https://www.danas.rs/vesti/drustvo/odakle-dolaze-dojave-o-bombama-u-srbiji/>, accessed on 7 August 2023. Tronedeljni obavezni vojni rok – predlog ministra profesionalcima upitan [Three-week Mandatory Military Service – Minister’s Proposal to Professionals Questionable], Južne vesti, 8 December 2022, available at: <https://www.juznevesti.com/Drushtvo/Tronedeljni-obavezni-vojni-rok-predlog-ministra-professionalcima-upitan.sr.html>, accessed on 7 August 2023. U 360 stepeni o naoružavanju Srbije, generali Momir Stojanović i Sreto Malinović [In the 360 Degrees about the Arming of Serbia, Generals Momir Stojanović and Sreto Malinović], N1, 14 April 2022, available at: <https://n1info.rs/vesti/360-stepeni-gosti-sreto-malinovic-i-momir-stojanovic/>, accessed on 7 August 2022.

81 Bivši načelnik VBA o eskalaciji sukoba na Kosovu: Momir Stojanović o vojsci na administrativnoj liniji [Former Head of the Military Intelligence Agency on the Escalation of Situation in Kosovo: Momir Stojanović on the Army at the Administrative Line], Nova.rs, 13 December 2022, available at: <https://nova.rs/emisije/bivsi-nacelnik-vba-o-eskalaciji-sukoba-na-kosovu-momir-stojanovic-o-vojsci-na-administrativnoj-liniji/>, accessed on 7 August 2023.

82 Zašto podržavam Ponoša [Why I Support Ponoš], Danas, 31 January 2022, available at: <https://www.danas.rs/vesti/politika/stojanovic-zasto-podrzavam-general-a-ponosa/>, accessed on 7 August 2023. Javne ličnosti: Ponoš može do drugog kruga uz podršku većinske opozicije [Public Figures: Ponoš Can Reach the Runoff With Support of the Majority Opposition], Danas, 4 February 2022, available at: <https://www.danas.rs/vesti/politika/izbori22/javne-licnosti-ponos-moze-do-drugog-kruga-uz-podrsku-vecinske-opozicije/>, accessed on 7 August 2023.

83 Odnos prema ratnim zločinima u izbornoj kampanji 2022. godine [Attitude Towards War Crimes in the 2022 Election Campaign], YIHR, March 2022.

through well-known statements characterising the Srebrenica massacre as ‘a huge crime, but not a genocide’. Furthermore, they went a step further, affirming their refusal to pass resolutions condemning and recognising the Srebrenica genocide.

Certain lists, such as ‘United for the Victory of Serbia’ and Boris Tadić ‘Let’s Go People’ assert that the 2010 Declaration of the National Assembly of Serbia, condemning the crimes in Srebrenica, is ‘sufficient enough’. This Declaration does not explicitly characterise the crimes as genocide, although it does reference the judgment of the International Court of Justice.

During the campaign, Zdravko Ponoš, a candidate for the presidency of Serbia, referred to Ratko Mladić as a ‘tragic figure’ who ‘despite committing crimes, achieved some brilliant accomplishments’.

## The Aesthetic of Denial

The competent authorities failed to remove the mural on Njegoševa Street during 2022, too, despite consistent efforts from activists and citizens who regularly advocated for its removal through nearly daily interventions on the mural.

In early January 2022, graffiti emerged in Priboj with messages such as ‘From Priboj to The Hague, everybody is sided with Ratko the General’, ‘Ratko Mladić, Serbian Hero’, and ‘Ratko Mladić Hero’.<sup>84</sup>

In mid-January, a mural of Ratko Mladić appeared in Mileve Marić Street in Novi Sad<sup>85</sup>. A few days later, the mural was defaced with white and red spray print, and the words ‘LSV’ (League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina) and ‘Say Hello to Your Mum’ were added.<sup>86</sup>

In late January 2022, the name of Ratko Mladić, sometimes accompanied by the addition ‘Serbian hero’, was inscribed on several buildings in central Knez Mihailova Street in Belgrade. Due to their location in the hugely frequented tourist area, the graffiti in Knez Mihailova Street were quickly removed.<sup>87</sup>

Also in late January, the portal ‘Serbia Today’ reported that, ‘a trend of painting portraits of celebrities is spreading across Serbia’, and that this trend reached Velika Plana. The article stated that, ‘unlike many other towns and municipalities, this municipality, situated on the border of Pomoravlje and Šumadija, does not have any murals that it should be ashamed of’. The article went on to describe four murals, with the last one dedicated to Ratko Mladić. Painted on the building next to the Socialist Party of Serbia headquarters,

84 Grafiti posvećeni zločincu Ratku Mladiću osvanuli u Priboju [Graffiti Dedicated to War Criminal Ratko Mladić Emerged in Priboj], Sandžak Press, 8 January 2022, available at: <https://sandzakpress.net/grafiti-posveceni-zlocincu-ratku-mladicu-osvanuli-u-priboju-foto/>, accessed on 31 July 2023.

85 Oslikan veliki mural posvećen Ratku Mladiću na Novom naselju [Large Mural Dedicated to Ratko Mladić Painted in Novo Naselje], 021.rs, 21 January 2022, available at: <https://www.021.rs/story/Novi-Sad/Vesti/295693/FOTO-VIDEO-Oslikan-veliki-mural-posvecen-Ratku-Mladicu-na-Novom-naselju.html>, accessed on 20 July 2023.

86 Išaran mural posvećen Ratku Mladiću na Novom naselju [Mural Dedicated to Ratko Mladić in Novo Naselje Defaced], 021.rs, 23 January 2022, available at: <https://www.021.rs/story/Novi-Sad/Vesti/295815/FOTO-Isaran-mural-posvecen-Ratku-Mladicu-na-Novom-naselju.html>, accessed on 20 July 2023.

87 Veličaju Mladića i na zgradi SANU! Nisu ih sprečile ni kamere, ideološki rat se preselio u Knez Mihailovu [Glorifying Mladić on the Building of Serbian Academy of Arts and Science! Not Even Deterred by the Cameras, Ideological War Moved to Knez Mihailova Street], Espresso, 31 January 2022, available at: <https://www.espreso.co.rs/vesti/beograd/971531/mural-ratko-mladic>, accessed on 20 July 2023.

'unknown artists painted a composition divided into three equal parts. The first third had a white Maltese cross on the red background, the middle portion displayed a Serbian tricolour, and the final third featured a portrait of the legendary military commander of the Army of Republic of Srpska, accompanied by the words in Cyrillic, arranged in three rows, in the Serbian flag hues, 'Ratko Mladić, Serbian Hero'.<sup>88</sup>

In late April 2022, a graffiti appeared on the wall of the Primary School 'Miroslav Antić' in Niš, displaying the words 'Just Say Hero!', along with a stencil image of Ratko Mladić.<sup>89</sup>

In the second half of June 2022, the flag of Serbia was painted on the wall of a deserted building in the centre of Budisava, with the name of Ratko Mladić written over it, accompanied by the letter Z.<sup>90</sup>

On 22 July 2022, the YIHR urged Aleksandar Šapić, the Mayor of Belgrade, to instruct communal services to remove the mural one year after it first appeared in Njegoševa Street.<sup>91</sup> In response to YIHR's call, the following day, the Mayor stated, 'he does not know whether Mladić committed war crimes, but he knows that Mladić defended the Serbian people in BiH'. Šapić added, 'We can always talk about graffiti and communal order in Belgrade, but without meddling with The Hague Tribunal and its judgments'. He emphasised, 'In that case, you are at the wrong address, and you will have to wait for some other Mayor to come to my place and fulfil that sort of The Hague wishes to you'.<sup>92</sup>

In September 2022, the YIHR launched a campaign to map murals and graffiti titled 'Truths That Shouldn't Be Denied,' and invited citizens of Serbia to participate by capturing photos of graffiti, murals, symbols, and images of Ratko Mladić in their surroundings.<sup>93</sup>

By the beginning of November 2022, the YIHR had documented over 220 graffiti and murals dedicated to Mladić, with nearly half of them appearing on the walls of public institutions, including educational institutions. Murals and graffiti conveying the message that Ratko Mladić is a hero could be found on the façades of the First and Third Belgrade Gymnasium.<sup>94</sup>

88 I Velika Plana ima svoje zidne murale: Patrijarsi Pavle i Irinej, Ratko Mladić i – devojka sa Morave [Velika Plana Also Has Its Murals: Patriarchs Pavle and Irinej, Ratko Mladić and – A Girl from the Morava], *Srbija Danas*, 31 January 2022, available at: <https://www.sd.rs/vesti/drustvo/i-velika-plana-ima-svoje-zidne-murale-patrijarsi-pavle-i-irinej-ratko-mladic-i-devojka-sa-morave-2022-01-31>, accessed on 20 July 2023.

89 Niš: Na zidovima škola i igrališta podrška ruskoj invaziji na Ukrajinu i ratnim zločincima [Niš: Support to Russian Invasion on Ukraine and War Criminals on the Walls of Schools and Playgrounds], *Danas*, 29 April 2022, available at: <https://www.danas.rs/vesti/drustvo/nis-na-zidovima-skola-i-igralista-podrska-ruskoj-invaziji-na-ukrajinu-i-ratnim-zlocincima/>, accessed on 23 August 2023.

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# Institutional Denial<sup>95\*</sup>

‘Račak is an awful and huge lie. Račak is a lie that served to justify the beginning of the NATO aggression against FRY. Račak is a lie that served to justify the killing of more than a hundred of our children. That lie must be exposed.’		
Literal denial	Minister of the Interior	Aleksandar Vulin
	Happy TV, published on mup.gov.rs.	15 January 2022

‘We have the example of today’s scandalous judgment against Ivan Todosijević, the President of Economic Council of the Zvečan municipality. He has been convicted by the Basic Court in Priština for a verbal offence, simply because he told the undisputable truth - that Račak was fabricated and that it served as a cause for the NATO aggression. I hope that higher instances will demonstrate more discernment and wisdom to overturn this controversial and shameful judgment’.		
Literal denial	MP, Serbian Progressive Party	Miroslav Linta
	National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia	19 October 2022

‘Therefore, Srebrenica is not a genocide, it must be said for the sake of truth’.		
Literal denial	MP, Democratic Party of Serbia	Predrag Marsenić
	National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia	23 December 2022

<sup>95</sup> Below are typical examples of denial, but the list is not exhaustive.

'So, just to clarify, since you mentioned my name again in connection with the time when you were discussing about forming a coalition after the elections. When you were exploring whether it was possible at all to form the coalition with this radical left, to form the coalition even with those in favour of the NATO membership, to form the coalition with those acknowledging Srebrenica as a genocide, to form the coalition, the Viola von Cramon coalition, with those who advocate recognising the unilaterally declared independence of Kosovo and the Republic of Kosovo. So, my name likely comes from that period, perhaps from one of Viola von Cramon's speeches, as she was the one preparing speeches for the whole coalition at that time'.

Literal denial	Prime Minister of Serbia	Ana Brnabić
	National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia	2 August 2022

'A declaration has been adopted condemning the crime in Srebrenica, a sentiment echoed by every normal person, including us as representatives of the government. However, on 29 June 2016, Marinika Tepić, along with Čedomir Jovanović, Nada Lazić, Olen Papuga, Enis Imamović, and others, submitted a proposal, which she signed as the initiator, the proposal for a resolution on genocide committed by the Serbian people in Srebrenica. Can you imagine that she put herself directly into service of all the enemies of the Serbs who have sought, for the past 30 years, to accuse us of something we did not do.'

Interpretative denial	MP, Serbian Progressive Party	Nataša Jovanović
	National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia	23 December 2022

'The crime in Srebrenica is a horrific, terrible crime; all the rest are legal formulations'

Interpretative denial	President of Serbia	Aleksandar Vučić
	Prva TV	11 February 2022

'I think that a grave crime occurred... and respects to the victims'

Interpretative denial	President of Serbia	Aleksandar Vučić
	Euronews Serbia	25 March 2022

'We Serbs west of the Drina River know what it means when a Serb lives outside of his state, where he does not have his doctor, teacher, police officer; we know how it is when you look at the school curriculum in which you can read that the genocide happened in Srebrenica, that Jasenovac was not a genocide, that Serbs were aggressors on the territory where they were born and have been dwelling for thousands of years', said Minister Vulin, stressing that it is absurd that Serbs are the only people in Europe who must prove that they were born where they were born.

Literal denial	Minister of the Interior	Aleksandar Vulin
	Ministry of the Interior	11 January 2022

'Shame on them and I don't know what they are doing in Serbia. I can't fathom how they are not ashamed to come to Vračar, visit their flats, and see whether they plan to buy something else in what they believe is a gross genocidal state that committed the Srebrenica genocide. Shame on them, I am sorry that they come to Serbia and pretend that they did not vote or do anything', said Vulin.

Literal denial	Minister of the Interior	Aleksandar Vulin
	Morning Show, TV Pink	2 July 2022

'Serbia, led by Aleksandar Vučić, is an autonomous and independent state that chooses its friends independently. Serbia will never forget that in 2015, the Russian Federation, with its veto in the Security Council after an agreement between Presidents Vladimir Putin and Aleksandar Vučić, prevented the adoption of a resolution, which, to the shame and distortion of truth, would have labelled the Serbian people as the first genocidal people in the history of the world', said Interior Minister Vulin at his meeting with the Russian Ambassador Botsan-Kharchenko.

Literal denial	Minister of the Interior	Aleksandar Vulin
	Ministry of the Interior	22 March 2022

'It is even more perplexing how Mrs Mihajlović voted for the British resolution, which portrays Serbs as a genocidal people, particularly infamous for raping men and boys, but remained a member of the government composed of individuals with a completely different opinion, both from her own and the UK'.

Literal denial	Minister of the Interior	Aleksandar Vulin
	Politika	17 October 2022

'The icon of Srebrenica has been intentionally planned and politically crafted to cover all the crimes committed against Serbs during the wars in the former Yugoslavia, in a very conscious and planned manner'.

'Srebrenica serves to cover up all the crimes against Serbs. There is no ethnic cleansing, nor genocide against Serbs, for example in Sarajevo, where 6000 Serbian civilians were killed, including women and children'.

Implicatory denial	President of the Parliamentary Committee for Kosovo and Metohija	Milovan Drecun
	Politika	26 July 2022

'Miodrag Linta, President of the Union of Serbs from the Region, reminds us that on this day 31 years ago, the Yugoslav People's Army liberated Vukovar from Croatian paramilitary units founded by the pro-Ustasha regime of Franjo Tuđman. On 14 September 1991, the Yugoslav People's Army, as the only legal and legitimate military force in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, launched a military operation to unblock the Vukovar barracks, which had been under open attack by Croatian paramilitary forces since the end of July, and fully blocked since late August.

It is a blatant lie of the Croatian side that the Yugoslav People's Army attacked Vukovar'.

Literal denial	President of the Union of Serbs from the Region and MP	Miodrag Linta
	Union of Serbs from the Region	19 November 2022

‘Miodrag Linta, President of the Union of Serbs from the Region, has proposed the establishment of an institute in Serbia dedicated to researching war and war crimes. One of its tasks would be to present arguments aiming to prove that genocide against Bosniaks did not occur in Srebrenica in 1995. He says that it is evident that The Hague Tribunal has issued numerous judgments against members of the military and political leadership of the Republic of Srpska without establishing any significant facts.’

‘The Hague Tribunal, in its judgments, has not proven that the political and military leadership of the Republic of Srpska intended to destroy Muslims from Srebrenica’.

‘This is a war crime committed out of revenge, prompted by the mass suffering of the Serbian civilians and soldiers in the area of Srebrenica and beyond. Captured Muslim soldiers were not executed because of their nationality, ethnicity, race, or religious background, but rather because they were treated as enemies who had committed crimes against the Serbs’.

Literal denial, interpretative denial	President of the Union of Serbs from the Region and MP	Miodrag Linta
	SRNA	11 July 2022

‘Rather than appearing on murals and on the walls, Radovan Karadžić and Ratko Mladić, as the founding fathers of the Republic of Srpska, should be featured on the front pages of historical textbooks as Serbian leaders who prevented a new genocide against Serbs in the territory of present-day Bosnia and Herzegovina, the third one in the same century’.

Literal denial	MP	Boško Obradović
	Twitter	25 July 2022

‘You want wheat, vaccines, oil, but you reject Open Balkan – they’re Serbs. You want to pass a resolution on genocide, claiming that the Serbs committed genocide in Srebrenica, yet you want their flour and oil’.

Literal denial	Minister of the Interior	Aleksandar Vulin
	www.mup.gov.rs	29 March 2022

‘Against a small country that unlikely harmed anyone, a country that never attacked anybody, that never violated the territory of others, a small nation of great people with only one desire - to be independent and protect their own, nothing else. But someone else - 19 of them, considered the greatest, most powerful, strong, the strongest, forceful, the most forceful - sought to demonstrate all their courage, arrogance, axiality, and haughtiness, on a small, undefeated people like the Serbs’.

Literal denial	President of Serbia	Aleksandar Vučić
	Day of Victims of the 1999 NATO aggression against FR Yugoslavia, Square of Serbian Warriors, Kraljevo	24 March 2022

## Extra-institutional denial

<p>Srebrenica, you are dear to me,          Dear God, give us three more of thee...'          'Hey Pazar - new Vukovar;          hey Sjenica - new Srebrenica...'          'Hey Fathima, where are your shalvars,          they are kept by Chetniks near Ledenik'</p>		
Literal denial		Members of the Interior Ministry outside service
	Private celebration in Priboj	2 January 2022

<p>'As we will forever remember every detail of the tragedy brought upon the inhabitants of FR Yugoslavia and Serbia by the 'Merciful Angel', a false humanitarian mission by the criminal NATO'.</p>		
Political and media use of the perpetrators	Retired Yugoslav Army General	Vladimir Lazarević
	Politika	4 March 2022

<p>'Under no circumstances will I ever accept the lie of some genocide, as Serbs have never committed genocide anywhere'.</p>		
Literal denial	Presidential candidate	Miloš Jovanović

	HOPE coalition	22 March 2022
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'GURI RADOSAVLJEVIĆ: THERE WAS NO MASACRE IN RAČAK! Račak was a pure setup for the NATO aggression, THERE WERE NO CIVILIAN VICTIMS'

'There can't be a massacre where there are no civilians in the village. No civilians were present in the village at that time. And of course, much has been written about it, and, ultimately, proof of all this is that this action was excluded from the indictment of all police generals currently in The Hague.'

Literal denial	Retired police general	Goran Radosavljević Guri
	Kurir TV	24 September 2022

'REAL TRUTH ABOUT THE 1999 EVENT; Alleged massacre of Serbian police against 'innocent Albanian civilians' in Račak DIRECTED BY CIA AND PENTAGON!'

'Subsequent events revealed that everything had been planned in advance, meticulously elaborated by the CIA and experts from the Pentagon. The objective was to find a pretext to put Serbian and Yugoslav security forces in a pillory, allowing the neo-Nazi leaderships of Western countries to justify the decision for aggression and bombing to their own public opinion, bombing and killing innocent people, destroying an internationally recognised state, a UN member', he said.

Literal denial	Former head of the Uroševac Police	Bogoljub Janićević
	Kurir	13 January 2022

'Ratko Mladić!', 'Mladić, my Boy, you have a problem that you are a Serbian hero!'

Literal denial	Football fan group	Delije Sever
	Plateau in front of the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade	25 February 2022

'I met him at the beginning of the war in Knin, and he was indeed a good officer. He executed brilliant military actions during the war. He did many good military things. Without it, there would not be a Republic of Srpska today.'

Interpretative denial		Zdravko Ponoš
	Utisak nedelje, Nova S	22 February 2022

'In my judgment, it is confirmed that our delegation is not responsible for the failure of Rambouillet. If it were but the only reason for me to go to the Hague, I would still gladly go. The signed Rambouillet agreement was presented as an ultimatum and served as a reason for starting the war. It is my duty to discuss these facts. For this fight, I received a decoration. Unfortunately, it must be acknowledged that some individuals from our side committed crimes, and someone had to be held accountable. It was pinned on me, and I paid the price'.

Interpretative denial		Nikola Šainović
	Večernje novosti	26 February 2022

'Several of Russian journalists compare the Bucha case with the one in the village of Račak in Kosovo and Metohija, where murdered terrorists were brought and presented as civilians. Moscow TV commentators argue that the Ukrainian war propaganda aims to portray the Bucha case as the 'Ukrainian Srebrenica'.

Literal denial	Bucha as Kyiv's Račak	
	Večernje novosti	5 April 2022

'Serbs who supported international law had to be demonised. According to this narrative, General Ratko Mladić had to be portrayed as a 'war criminal', similar to how President Vladimir Putin is being portrayed in the ongoing conflict in Ukraine.

The explosions at Markale Square, amidst people queueing to buy bread, were considered the 'false flag' actions, accusing the other side and justifying NATO's bombing of Serbia.

The 'Srebrenica massacre' was ordered by President Clinton as early as 1993. The implementation of the 'massacre' began in August 1995, coinciding with the visit of the official from The Hague Tribunal to Tuzla. At the same time, side by side with him, a UN official interviewed the inhabitants of Srebrenica, none of whom saw the massacre'.

Literal denial	Srebrenica, Račak and Bucha, the same face of Western Propaganda: Finish Professor Reveals Lies of the American Nazi Diaspora	Opinion piece/Pirko Turpeinen-Sari
	Večernje novosti	11 April 2022



'General's Testament about Kosovo!		
Dragoljub Ojdanić left a note for younger generations in which he meticulously and with minute precision deconstructed the actions of the terrorist KLA during the NATO bombing in 1999'		
Political and media use of the perpetrators	Cover page	
	Srpski telegraf	7 May 2022

'And what court does not have a higher instance? Who is forbidden to walk down the street? They can't interfere in the internal affairs of our country. It pains them that year after year, the truth about the flaws of the Western judiciary becomes increasingly evident both in this country and throughout the region', said Lazarević. He added that in the judgment by which he was sentenced to 14 years' imprisonment, there is no ban on speech. 'Look at Wesley Clark who issued the genocidal order 'Devastate, degrade, destroy' before the bombing. He returns to the scene of the crime every year, to our country, to Kosovo and Metohija. Now, those who sought to destroy us through a monstrous military action are lecturing us about staying quiet. What about the 2000 victims in Kosovo and Metohija after the arrival of NATO? Who will be held responsible for that? And now they are threatening us into silence. I will continue to speak for as long as I live.		
Literal denial	Hague Convicts forced out of the screens: The European Commission's report raises objections including those about the public appearances of our generals and politicians	Vladimir Lazarević
	Večernje novosti	20 May 2022

'Unfortunately, the foundations of the Bosniak society's politics relies on the alleged genocide in Srebrenica. We all know what was going on there during the war and the definition of genocide. The Serbian people vividly remembered what genocide meant during the Second World War. And all who want to learn about that term are free to visit Jasenovac. Despite the fact that several thousand Serbs were killed in Podrinje, and monstrous crimes were committed, they are persistently downplayed from Sarajevo, while crimes against Bosniaks are glorified', said Kojić.

Literal denial	(Correction) Visitors to Potočari do not have to sign on 'genocide'	Miodrag Kojić
	Večernje novosti	14 June 2022

They aim to convict all Serbs for 'genocide'

Sven Alkalaj, the BiH Ambassador to the UN, has called for the UN General Assembly to condemn the 'genocide' in Srebrenica and declare 11 July a 'world day of genocide', forcing Serbs to accept guilt.

Literal denial	Front page	
	Informer	22 June 2022

The Bosniak leadership is orchestrating a circus, trying to accuse the Republic of Srpska, the Serbian people, and Serbia of being responsible for the alleged genocide allegedly committed by the forces of the Republic of Srpska Army in 1995. Of course, while a significant crime was committed there, and nobody disputes that, many experts across the Balkans and Europe question whether it qualifies as genocide, because there is a clear definition as to what genocide is. Their plan revolves around unitary Bosnia, a concept not recognised by the Dayton Agreement. According to the agreement, even a simple decision requires the approval of the Presidency responsible for foreign policy, which consists of three members.

Literal denial	Serbian children to learn about genocide – a sick request by Christian Schmidt! Dodik is clear – A German will not teach us history!	
	Večernje novosti	22 June 2022

'They stigmatize Serbs in an attempt to nullify the Republic of Srpska

Goal: to insist on the recognition of the genocide and the dismantling of the Dayton Agreement. A genocidal people can't be the beneficiary of a peace agreement'

Implicatory denial	Front page	
	Večernje novosti	15 July 2022

'Schmidt did not come to support the constitutional order of BiH, derived from the Dayton Peace Agreement. Instead, he aims to sow unrest and is willing do anything to undermine the existing order. Part of such politics also involves attempting to impose fabrications about the 'genocide' in Srebrenica on Serbs.'

Literal denial	Pushing for 'genocide' in the UN Assembly: what is behind the new resolution on Srebrenica Sarajevo lobbies for	
	Informer	13 July 2022

<p>'So, on 7 August I had a conversation with the former President of the Republic of Srpska, Radovan Karadžić. He called me from a British prison, and it was, of course, a great honour to discuss the Serbian national idea, past, present, and future with him. President Karadžić is very strong, mentally strong and optimistic. He believes in a bright future for the Serbian people, and he is especially glad to see a strong resurgence of the Serbian national idea in recent years. I shared my position with him, which he is well aware of – that Serbia, the Republic of Srpska, and Montenegro should form a uniform Serbian state. I agreed with him that the Serbian people have a very bright future, that the rise of our national idea has only just begun, and that we are yet to see a happy ending to this resurgence of our national idea', said Raković.</p>		
Political and media use of the perpetrators	Radovan's prophecy about the destiny of Serbs – former president of the Republic of Srpska called from infamous British prison	Aleksandar Raković historian
	Alo	17 August 2022

<p>'General Radinović says that one of the greatest manipulations is the claim that Serbs shot from snipers and shelled the city while holding Sarajevo in siege from the surrounding hills.</p> <p>'Despite the facts speaking to the contrary, this lie still prevails. Muslim forces held the hill of Hum directly above the city, and in extension, the hill of Žuč. On the opposite side, under their control was also the hill of Mojmiło, which reaches almost half of the city. Serbs held Trebević and Radava, positions overlooking Koševo. It is often mentioned that Serbs were attacking from Grbavica, but it is not said that this neighbourhood was also divided, just like Sarajevo itself', concludes General Radovan Radinović.</p>		
Literal denial	There Was No Manhunt	General Radovan Radinović
	Vesti-online	2 September 2022

