

# STATE OF DENIAL

SERBIA 2024  
LYING UNDER THE FLAG





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# Abbreviations

BiH – Bosnia and Herzegovina

BIRN - Balkan Investigative Reporting Network

FRY – Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

ICTY – International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia

IRMCT – International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals

JNA – Yugoslav People’s Army

MP – Member of Parliament

NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

OSCE – Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe

OWCP - Office of the War Crimes Prosecutor

RSA – Republika Srpska Army

RTRS – Radio Television Republika Srpska

RTS – Radio Television Serbia

RTV – Radio Television Vojvodina

HLC – Humanitarian Law Center

UN – United Nations

YA – Yugoslav Army

YIHR – Youth Initiative for Human Rights

# Introduction

Since its establishment in 2003, the Youth Initiative for Human Rights (YIHR) has consistently advocated for a society grounded in 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 the former Yugoslavia, and accepting responsibility for them are essential steps towards building such a society.

The report on the denial of war crimes in 2024 is the third of its kind, following the pattern of institutional denial of the 1990s war crimes by officials of the Republic of Serbia, examined through several segments. The report opens with an analysis of specific actions by judicial institutions that reinforce the principles of denial and impunity.

This is followed by a brief overview of denial practices in 2024, the main proponents of such practices, media manipulation of the perpetrators, as well as the aesthetic of denial. The report also presents in detail the denial of specific war crimes and the glorification of war criminals, including during the local election campaign held in June 2024.

In February 2024, the YIHR urged the then Serbian caretaker Prime, Ana Brnabić, to respond without delay to the letter from Dunja Mijatović, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, in which she recommended steps to improve the process of dealing with the past. To date, neither Brnabić, nor the now former Prime Minister Miloš Vučević, has replied to the Commissioner.<sup>1</sup>

The European Commission's September 2024 report on Serbia's progress in the area of the rule of law noted numerous instances of glorifying war criminals, providing them with media platform, and denying war crimes and genocide.<sup>2</sup> Serge Brammertz, Chief Prosecutor of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (IRMCT) also emphasised the continued practice of war crimes denial. In December 2024, he stated to the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN) that the denial of war crimes and glorification of their perpetrators in the countries of the former Yugoslavia is now more widespread than ever before and represents the biggest threat to progress in the region.<sup>3</sup>

No war crimes investigations were initiated in 2024 against individuals mentioned in the judgment against Jovica Stanišić and Franko Simatović. On the contrary, Serbian officials continued to glorify individuals such as Radojica Božović and Živorad Ivanović,

1 "Komesarka Saveta Evrope za ljudska prava poziva vlasti u Srbiji da uklone murale ratnih zločinaca", Youth Initiative for Human Rights, 23 February 2024, <https://yihr.rs/bhs/komesarka-saveta-evrope-za-ljudska-prava-poziva-vlasti-u-srbiji-da-uklone-murale-ratnih-zlocinaca/>

2 "Brisel poziva Srbiju na napredak u pravosuđu, gonjenju ratnih zločinaca i poštovanju medijskih sloboda", Radio Free Europe, 6 September 2024, <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/evropska-komisija-izvestaj-srbija-eu/33109393.html>

3 "Glorification of War Criminals 'Obstructing a Better Future': Hague Prosecutor", BIRN, 30 December 2024, <https://balkaninsight.com/2024/12/30/glorification-of-war-criminals-obstructing-a-better-future-hague-prosecutor/>

both former officers of the notorious Red Berets, later the Special Operation Unit. Božović and Ivanović are suspected of committing war crimes across Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and Croatia. This trend is particularly alarming in a year that also saw the final acquittal in the trial for the murder of journalist Slavko Ćuruvija, in the case in which the accused included members and high-ranking officials of the State Security Service during the Milošević regime.<sup>4</sup>

The scale of denial, especially with regard to the Srebrenica genocide, is further illustrated by the silence surrounding the letter of Radoslav Krstić, which the IRMCT released in November 2024. In his request for early release, Krstić, who was convicted for aiding and abetting genocide, acknowledged personal responsibility and stated that he would “vote for the Resolution on Srebrenica”.<sup>5</sup>

As the year 2024 was marked by a disinformation campaign led by the Serbian authorities against the adoption of the Resolution on the Srebrenica genocide, which was passed by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly on 23 May, this year’s report is titled *Lying under the Flag*.

## Methodological Framework

The YIHR’s third annual report on the denial of war crimes and other human rights violations in connection with armed conflicts in the former Yugoslavia is methodologically based on the content analysis of statements made by political officials and other individuals, official institutional statements, and media articles.

With regard to the source of denial and the proponent of denial, we can distinguish between institutional and extra/institutional denial.

Institutional denial in Serbia is rooted in the state’s remembrance policy, which is marked by historical revisionism, the relativisation of committed crimes, and the denial of accountability.

Extra-institutional denial is particularly prevalent in the media, with proponents including not only media outlets, but also influential members of society such as university professors and retired military officers. Additionally, pseudo-scientists and self-proclaimed experts, as well as various right-wing and/or extremist groups, contribute to the spread of extra-institutional denial.

Convicted war criminals and individuals suspected of war crimes are also the proponents of extra-institutional denial. However,

4 Presuda Apelacionog suda kojom su pravosnažno oslobođeni okrivljeni za ubistvo Slavka Ćuruvije, Slavko Ćuruvija Foundation, 12 February 2024, <https://www.slavkocuruvijafondacija.rs/presuda-apelacionog-suda-kojom-su-pravosnazno-oslobodeni-okrivljeni-za-ubistvo-slavka-curuvije/>

5 “Krstićevo priznanje genocida ignorisano u RS-u i Srbiji”, BIRN, 9 December 2024, <https://balkaninsight.com/sr/2024/12/09/krsticevo-priznanje-genocida-ignorisano-u-rs-u-i-srbiji/>

this form of denial does not exist in a social vacuum. It is actively supported by Serbian institutions, in particular through the political construction of reality. In this narrative, the relativisation and denial of the facts and events from the past are embedded in the state's official discourse on the armed conflicts of the 1990s. Denial is not only tolerated and endorsed, but it is sometimes even financially supported.

This report identifies three denial strategies used in public discourse: literal denial, interpretative denial, and implicatory denial.

- Literal denial involves outright claims that something did not happen or that certain facts are untrue. This strategy is rarely employed in Serbia due to the substantial body of evidence and the well-established judicial findings of both the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and national courts.
- Interpretative denial acknowledges that an event took place but disputes its full extent, particularly its legal characterisation, which is often dismissed as incorrect, overly severe, or unjust. This is the primary strategy used by Serbian government officials, especially in relation to war crimes confirmed by ICTY judgments. As a rule, it is most commonly applied to deny the Srebrenica genocide, rejecting the legal interpretation of the facts of the crime, challenging the credibility of those who established the facts, and downplaying both the crime's significance and the responsibility of those involved, even while ostensibly acknowledging the harm.
- Implicatory denial serves to deflect moral or psychological responsibility. It recognises that a certain war crime occurred, but introduces reservations, often by attributing it to actors unaffiliated with the side employing this strategy. This form of denial frequently shifts responsibility onto the victims, using historical context as a justification for the crime.<sup>6</sup>

These strategies are often intertwined and employed simultaneously. When confronted with irrefutable evidence, literal denial does not disappear, but rather transforms into legalistic reinterpretation or political justification

Some of the most prominent examples of both institutional and extra-institutional denial of war crimes are presented at the end of this report.

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<sup>6</sup> Youth Initiative for Human Rights, State of Denial: Serbia 2022 – Time of Silent Pride [Belgrade: YIHR, 2023], <https://yih.rs/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Stanje-poricanja-ENG.pdf>

# Actions of Judicial Institutions

During 2024, the trial of Milenko Živanović, former commander of the Drina Corps of the Republika Srpska Army (RSA), continued. Živanović led the RSA offensive to conquer Srebrenica in July 1995, which ended with the killing of more than 7,000 Bosniak men and boys and the expulsion of around 40,000 women, children and elderly, continued.

In December 2021, the Office of the War Crimes Prosecutor (OWCP) in Serbia indicted Živanović for ordering the forced removal of the Bosniak civilian population and participating in their forced relocation from Srebrenica, but qualified the offence as a war crime against the civilian population. In 2024, six out of eight scheduled trial sessions were held.

Živanović's trial represents an institutional practice of denial by judicial authorities in Serbia, as the War Crimes Department of the Higher Court in Belgrade is not prosecuting him for the crime against humanity, for which, in connection with the same events of July 1995, he was charged before the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). In January 2022, the State Prosecutor's Office of BiH indicted Živanović for crimes against humanity committed on the territory of Srebrenica and Žepa in 1995.<sup>7</sup> The indictment raised in Serbia is less severe; it does not mention that genocide was committed in Srebrenica, nor does it link the events to the political leadership of the Bosnian Serbs.<sup>8</sup>

Through the Ministry of Justice of BiH, the Court of BiH summoned Živanović to appear, but the competent authorities in Serbia – where Živanović resides – informed the Ministry of Justice of BiH that the subpoena had been duly delivered to him.<sup>9</sup> For his failure to appear before the court in BiH, the Prosecutor's Office of BiH requested that he be remanded and international wanted notice be issued, which was subsequently done by order of the Court of BiH.<sup>10</sup> The Prosecutor's Office of BiH stated that it was not aware that investigation was being conducted and an indictment was being prepared against Živanović in Belgrade, while the Serbian authorities had information that an investigation was ongoing in BiH.<sup>11</sup>

In late 2023, a video surfaced showing Milivoje Batinica striking one of his players during a game. Batinica is the coach of a mini-

7 "Komandant Drinskog korpusa VRS optužen za zločine u Srebrenici i Žepi", Radio Free Europe, 4 January 2022, <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/optuznica-komandant-drinskog-korpusa-srebrenica/31638895.html>

8 Milica Stojanović, "Srebrenica: Why Did Two Countries Indict the Same Bosnian Serb General?", Balkan Insight, 23 May 2022, <https://balkaninsight.com/2022/05/23/srebrenica-why-did-two-countries-indict-the-same-bosnian-serb-general/>

9 "BiH raspisala međunarodnu potjernicu za Milenkom Živanovićem, optuženim za zločine u Srebrenici", Radio Free Europe, 28 July 2023, <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/potjernica-milenko-zivanovic-zlocini-u-srebrenici-optuznica/32524242.html>

10 Ibid.

11 Milica Stojanović, "Srebrenica: Why Did Two Countries Indict the Same Bosnian Serb General?", Balkan Insight, 23 May 2022, <https://balkaninsight.com/2022/05/23/srebrenica-why-did-two-countries-indict-the-same-bosnian-serb-general/>

football team in Zrenjanin and, according to the opposition claims which had not been refuted by April 2025, one of the founders of the Serbian Progressive Party in that town. Also, according to some reports, he is employed at the public company Telekom Srbija. Batinica is one of eight former members of the Special Brigade of the Republika Srpska police indicted before the Higher Court in Belgrade for murdering 1,313 Bosniak civilians at the agricultural co-operative in Kravica, near Srebrenica, in July 1995, an act qualified as a war crime against civilian population.

In the Tuzla gate case, the 2014 judgment of the Court of BiH, which sentenced Novak Đukić to 20 years' imprisonment, remained unenforced throughout 2024. Since 2018, forensic experts have repeatedly determined that Đukić is medically unfit to stand trial, prompting annual forensic examination that invariably yield the same conclusions.<sup>12</sup> The persistent delays in this case, along with the failure of the Appellate Court in Belgrade to issue a decision in the years-long proceedings on whether to recognise the judgment of the Court of BiH in the Đukić case, have been repeatedly criticised by the European Commission in its reports on Serbia's progress towards EU integration.<sup>13</sup>

Former member of the Rear Battalion of the 549th Motorised Brigade of the Yugoslav Army (YA), Rajko Kozlina, was found guilty by the Higher Court in Belgrade in 2019 for the crime committed in the village of Trnje in Kosovo in March 1999. However, Kozlina failed to report to serve his sentence, and the court issued a wanted notice. In 2020, the Ministry of the Interior refused to disclose whether Kozlina had used official border crossings, while the Second Basic Court in Belgrade, responsible for enforcing the judgment, did not respond to the question whether and how it proceeded in this case.<sup>14</sup> Kozlina remains at large, and there was no information on his whereabouts in 2024, either.

In early 2022, a group of Serbian police officers sang a song glorifying the Srebrenica genocide at a private party in Priboj. The then Interior Minister, Aleksandar Vulin, announced disciplinary proceedings against the individuals involved.<sup>15</sup> In September 2024, the Higher Court in Užice sentenced two individuals at first instance to six months of house arrest for inciting national, racial and religious hatred.<sup>16</sup>

12 Humanitarian Law Center, Report on War Crimes Trials in Serbia during 2023 (Belgrade: HLC, May 2024), p. 7. [http://www.hlc-rdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Godisnji\\_izvestaj\\_2324\\_eng\\_CEO\\_web.pdf](http://www.hlc-rdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Godisnji_izvestaj_2324_eng_CEO_web.pdf)

13 European Commission, Serbia 2024 Report, (Brussels: EC, 30 October 2024), p. 32, [https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/document/download/3c8c2d7f-bff7-44eb-b868-414730cc5902\\_en?filename=Serbia%20Report%202024.pdf](https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/document/download/3c8c2d7f-bff7-44eb-b868-414730cc5902_en?filename=Serbia%20Report%202024.pdf)

14 "Osudenom ratnom zločinu Rajku Kozlini mesto je u zatvoru, ne u Vojsci Srbije", YIHR, 11 November 2020, <https://yihr.rs/bhs/osudenom-ratnom-zlocincu-kozlini-mesto-je-u-zatvoru-ne-u-vojsci-srbije/>

15 "Vulin: Disciplinski postupak protiv policajaca koji su pevali o Srebrenici", Radio Free Europe, 5 January 2022, <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/priboj-srebrenica-policajci-srbija/31640358.html>

16 "Osudeni policajci iz Priboja zbog pevanja šovinističke pesme", Radio Free Europe, 26 September 2024, <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/policajci-priboj-presuda-genocid-tenzije/33136359.html>

Seven former members of the 177th Military Territorial Squad of the YA (known as the Jackals) were sentenced on 24 April 2024 for crimes against Albanian civilians in the villages near Peć in 1999.<sup>17</sup> The judgment was rendered 14 years after the beginning of the trial. In connection with this judgment, the OSCE called on institutions in Serbia to prosecute and adjudicate war crimes cases more efficiently and expeditiously.<sup>18</sup>

In February 2024, the 31st anniversary of the abduction and murder of non-Serb passengers from a train in Štrpci was marked. To date, nobody has been held accountable for this crime. The trial before the court in Serbia began in 2019. The first-instance judgment against four members of the Avengers paramilitary unit was rendered in 2023, but was quashed in the same year.<sup>19</sup> The remains of only four victims have been discovered, while the remaining sixteen are still missing.

In 2012, the ICTY charged Vjerica Radeta and Petar Jojić, members of the Serbian Radical Party, with contempt of court for contacting witnesses, pressuring them to change their testimonies and give false statements, and offering bribe. An arrest warrant was issued in 2015, and Serbia was ordered to extradite them to The Hague Tribunal, which it failed to do. An international arrest warrant was issued one year later. In 2016, the Higher Court in Belgrade ruled that there were no legal grounds for the arrest and extradition of Radeta and Jojić.<sup>20</sup> The case was taken over by the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (IRMCT), which decided in 2018 to have them prosecuted in Serbia. However, this decision was annulled after it was concluded that the necessary conditions for prosecution in Serbia did not exist. To date, Serbia has not extradited Radeta and Jojić to the IRMCT. On 11 June, at a session of the United Nations Security Council (UN SC), IRMCT President Garciela Gatti Santana reported Serbia for refusing to hand over the accused Radicals, accusing it of obstructing the court in carrying out its mandate.<sup>21</sup> The IRMCT has been reporting Serbia to the UN SC in connection with this case for years.

In August 2023, the IRMCT filed an indictment against Vojislav Šešelj and four members of the Serbian Radical Party for contempt of court, that is, obstruction of the administration of justice, revealing confidential information about protected witnesses, and

17 "Sedam bivših pripadnika grupe 'Šakali' osuđeno za zločine nad kosovskim Albancima", Radio Free Europe, 24 April 2024, <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/presuda-ratni-zlocin-kosovo-cuska/32919050.html>

18 "OEBS povodom presude za zločine na Kosovu pozvao na efikasnije procese", Radio Free Europe, 26 April 2024, <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/oeb-cuska-presuda-ratni-zlocini/32922020.html>

19 "Sud u Beogradu poništio prvostepenu presudu za zločin u Štrpcima", Radio Free Europe, 12 December 2023, <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/zlocin-strpci-sud-presuda-ukinuta/32727362.html>

20 Ljudmila Cvetković, "Hag opet traži, država i Šešeljevi radikali ne daju Radetu i Jojića", Radio Free Europe, 9 December 2020, <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/hag-opet-tra%C5%BEi-dr%C5%BEava-i-%C5%A1e%C5%A1eljevi-radikali-ne-daju-radetu-i-joj%C4%87a-/30992299.html>

21 "Srbiji nova prijava suda u Hagu zbog odbijanja da izruči funkcionere Srpske radikalne stranke", Radio Free Europe, 11 June 2024, <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/srbija-sud-u-hagu-savet-bezbednosti-un-izrucenje-jojic-radeta-srs/32988640.html>

failing to comply with court orders. In February 2024, the court decided to forward the case to Serbia.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, this did not prevent one of the accused, Miljan Damjanović, from being appointed a member of the Belgrade City Council following the June 2024 elections, just as it did not prevent Šešelj from actively participating in the campaign for those same elections.

## Actions and Statements by Executive Authorities: Denial in 2024

The first crime to be denied in the new year is, as a rule, the crime committed in the village of Račak by members of the Serbian Ministry of the Interior against Albanian civilians in 1999. Accordingly, the year 2024 began with a meeting of Petar Petković, Director of the Serbian Government's Office for Kosovo and Metohija, and Danica Marinković, the former investigating judge who conducted the crime scene investigation into the Račak events, held on the anniversary of the massacre on 15 January. On that occasion, Petković thanked her for her work, stating that "her professional and methodical investigation contributed to establishing irrefutable facts about the events in Račak", and that "the facts preserved for history by Danica Marinković dismantle any attempt to fabricate the event in Račak".<sup>23</sup>

Throughout the year, ceremonies for awarding veteran medals were organised on several occasions. In January, veteran medals were presented by Miloš Vučević, at the time Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, and Nikola Selaković, then Minister of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs, accompanied by Vladimir Lazarević, commander of the YA Priština Crops, who was convicted by the Hague Tribunal of crimes against humanity committed against Albanian civilians in Kosovo. Lazarević also delivered a speech at the ceremony.<sup>24</sup>

In February, citizens of Bor had the opportunity to attend a promotional event for a book by Veselin Šljivančanin, who was convicted for war crimes against wounded Croatian soldiers and prisoners of war at the Ovčara farm near Vukovar. The promotion was organised at the Cultural Centre by the City Assembly of Bor. The President of the City Assembly, Dragan Žikić, personally welcomed

22 Lamiya Grebo, "Hague Court Sends Serbian Radicals' Case to Belgrade for Trial", Balkan Insight, 4 March 2024, <https://balkaninsight.com/2024/03/04/hague-court-sends-serbian-radicals-case-to-belgrade-for-trial/>

23 "Petković zahvalio sudiji Marinković što istražava u borbi za istinu i pravdu o događajima u Račku", Government of Serbia's Office for Kosovo and Metohija, 15 January 2024, <https://www.kim.gov.rs/lat/v5429.php>

24 "Dodeljene Boračke spomenice borcima, ratnim vojnim invalidima i porodicama palih boraca sa teritorije opštine Apatin", Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Serbia, 29 January 2024, <https://www.mod.gov.rs/cir/20904/dodeljene-boracke-spomenice-borcima-ratnim-vojn timer-invalidima-i-porodicama-palih-boraca-sa-teritorije-opstine-apatin20904>

the audience.<sup>25</sup> Šljivančanin is not the only convicted war criminal granted a platform to promote a book in 2024. The biography of Nebojša Pavković, commander of the YA Third Army during the Kosovo war and convicted for crimes against humanity against Albanian civilians, was promoted in army halls, cultural centres, and at book fairs across Serbia. One such promotion was attended by Aleksandar Vulin, the First Deputy Prime Minister.

In February, Belgrade Mayor Aleksandar Šapić appeared on TV Insider, and in response to a journalist's question about his statement that Belgrade needed a "Serbian government", claimed that certain opposition politicians wanted to portray the Serbs as a genocidal people, and that if such politicians came to power in Belgrade, "this would not be Serbian policy".<sup>26</sup> He also criticised the ICTY for being "non-objective, biased and the court which handed down the highest number of convictions to the detriment of the Serbs", and, referring to the legal qualification of the Srebrenica crime as genocide, added: "Hundreds of tribunals in The Hague may say that, but we must not allow it".<sup>27</sup>

In March and April, a series of commemorations, conferences, and panel discussions were held to mark the anniversary of the beginning of the NATO bombing of Serbia. At the state commemoration in Niš, Vučević and Selaković once again appeared alongside Lazarević, who again gave a speech.<sup>28</sup> Lazarević and Selaković also jointly attended the ceremony in Kruševac marking the 25th anniversary of the Battle of Košare.<sup>29</sup> Throughout the year, Lazarević took part in numerous other commemorative events, conferences, panel discussions and ceremonies, where, often in the company of senior government officials, he denied that war crimes had been committed.

The spring, early summer, and much of the remainder of the year were marked by the government's intensive campaign against the adoption of the Resolution on Srebrenica at the UN General Assembly. The Resolution condemns the denial of genocide and the glorification of war criminals, and designates 11 July as the International Day of Remembrance of the Srebrenica Genocide. In addition to diplomatic efforts aimed at persuading other countries to vote against the Resolution, the campaign featured strongly negative rhetoric directed at both the Resolution and its sponsors, alongside factual distortions in the public discourse. A dominant narrative promoted by the country's highest officials portrayed the Resolution as branding the Serbs a "genocidal people", claiming

25 Branislava Stević, "Promocija knjige 'Ovo je moja zemlja, ovde ja komandujem'", Radio televizija Bor, 22 February 2024, <https://rtvbor.rs/promocija-knjige-ovo-je-moja-zemlja-ovde-ja-komandujem/>

26 "Insajder intervju: Aleksandar Šapić", Insider, YouTube channel, 21 February 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=01kceDAs9H0&t=1906s>

27 Ibid.

28 Z. Miladinović, "Cilj NATO agresije bio je primena Hitlerove doktrine blic kruga: General u penziji i haški osuđenik Vladimir Lazarević na državnoj komemoraciji", Danas, 24 March 2024, <https://www.danas.rs/vesti/drustvo/cilj-nato-agresije-bio-je-primena-hitlerove-doktrine-blic-kriga-general-u-penziji-i-haski-osudjenik-vladimir-lazarevic-na-drzavnoj-komemoraciji/>

29 V.C. "Počast borcima 125. motorizovane brigade: Obeležavanje 25-godišnjice bitke na Košarama", Novosti, 9 April 2024, <https://www.novosti.rs/c/drustvo/vesti/1354498/pocast-borcima-125-motorizovane-brigade-obelezavanje-25-godisnjice-bitke-kosarama>

that its adoption would lead to the abolition of Republika Srpska, demands for Serbia to pay war reparations, and “additional pressure” on Serbia regarding Kosovo and its foreign policy orientation. Central to this narrative was also the denial that genocide occurred in Srebrenica, and the portrayal of the campaign against the Resolution as the righteous struggle of a small, freedom-loving nation against powerful global actors. Frequent reference was also made to the suffering of the Serbs during the Second World War, often drawing comparisons with the crime committed in Srebrenica.

The main proponent of this narrative was Aleksandar Vučić, President of the Republic of Serbia, who described the Resolution as “unfair” and “contrary to international public law”, claiming that its aim was “to punish the Serbs for pursuing a freedom-loving and independent policy”. In response to a media question regarding Serbia’s responsibility for the Srebrenica genocide, Vučić falsely stated that it had been established that Serbia bore no responsibility,<sup>30</sup> despite the fact that the International Court of Justice, ruling on BiH’s claim in 2007, found that Serbia had failed to do everything within its power to prevent the genocide, as required under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. In the midst of the campaign, Vučić delivered a speech at the Russian Cultural centre, declaring that he would fight for the truth at the UN General Assembly. He emphasised that we were witnessing historical revisionism and claimed that the Serbs had long been subjected to attempts to deny the genocide committed against them in the Second World War.<sup>31</sup>

Amidst the campaign against the Resolution, Aleksandar Vulin stated that it was “a horrible and enormous lie”, and described it as “disgustingly ironic” that Germany would “accuse” Serbia “of genocide”.<sup>32</sup> Ana Brnabić, President of the National Assembly, went a step further, claiming, among other things, that the Resolution imposed the notion that Aleksandar Vučić is “genocidist”, while repeatedly referring to the suffering of the Serbs in the Independent State of Croatia during the Second World War.<sup>33</sup> Ivica Dačić, Minister of the Interior, challenged the legal qualification of the crime in Srebrenica as genocide,<sup>34</sup> while the Minister of Justice, Maja Popović, questioned the number of victims.<sup>35</sup>

The Patriarch of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Porfirije, also commented on the draft Resolution: “For this reason, we are strongly

30 “[Video] Vučić u polemici s jednom novinarkom, Dodik vredao drugu: ‘Vidi ti one krave sa N1’”, N1, 16 April 2024, <https://n1info.rs/vesti/video-vucic-u-polemici-s-jednom-novinarkom-dodik-vredao-drugu-vidi-ti-one-krave-sa-n1/>

31 “Vučić: Biću ponovo u Njujorku od četvrtka do nedelje; Srbija zahvalna Rusiji koja brani istorijsku nauku od revizionista”, Tanjug, 15 May 2024, <https://www.tanjug.rs/srbija/politika/88476/vucic-bicu-ponovo-u-njujorku-od-cetvrtka-do-nedelje-srbija-zahvalna-rusiji-koja-brani-istorijsku-nauku-od-revizionista/vest>

32 “Vulin: Glasanje o rezoluciji o Srebrenici je glasanje o Srbiji i srpskom narodu”, RTV, 27 April 2024, [https://www.rtv.rs/sr\\_lat/politika/vulin-glasanje-o-rezoluciji-o-srebrenici-je-glasanje-o-srbiji-i-srpskom-narodu\\_1535761.html](https://www.rtv.rs/sr_lat/politika/vulin-glasanje-o-rezoluciji-o-srebrenici-je-glasanje-o-srbiji-i-srpskom-narodu_1535761.html)

33 “Brnabić: Vučić je i sam žrtva genocida nad srpskim narodom”, Serbian Progressive Party, 13. April 2024, <https://sns.org.rs/lat/novosti/saopstenja/brnabic-vucic-je-i-sam-zrtva-genocida-nad-srpskim-narodom>

34 “Dačić: Rezolucija o genocidu u Srebrenici ne doprinosi pomirenju”, RTV, 17 April 2024, [https://rtv.rs/sr\\_lat/politika/dacic-rezolucija-o-genocidu-u-srebrenici-ne-doprinosi-pomirenju\\_1532973.html](https://rtv.rs/sr_lat/politika/dacic-rezolucija-o-genocidu-u-srebrenici-ne-doprinosi-pomirenju_1532973.html)

35 Maja Popović, “U Srebrenici nije bilo genocida”, Politika, 23 April 2024, <https://www.politika.rs/sr/articles/amp/610833>

raising our voice today and drawing attention to the absolute lie and attempt at unprecedented historical revisionism, which, through a simple inversion, seeks to label the Serbian people - the victims of multiple genocides and ethnic cleansing - as the perpetrator of genocide".<sup>36</sup>

In June, Belgrade hosted the so-called All-Serb Assembly, which brought together the highest representatives of Serbia and Republika Srpska in response to the adoption of the Resolution on Srebrenica at the UN General Assembly. The outcome of the Assembly was the adoption of the Declaration on the Protection of the National and Political Rights and the Joint Future of the Serbian People, which, among other things, denies the Srebrenica genocide and rejects the Resolution. The Declaration was adopted by the Government and the National Assembly of Serbia.

Certain opposition politicians also took part in the campaign. Miloš Jovanović, leader of the NADA Coalition, announced a proposal for the declaration on Srebrenica, which denies that genocide occurred, claiming that the Resolution on Srebrenica brands the Serbs as a genocidal people.<sup>37</sup> Members of Parliament (MP) Aleksandar Pavić, Branimir Nestorović, and Branko Lukić took part on several occasions in the promotion of the book *Forbidden Truth about Srebrenica*, which denies that genocide was committed.<sup>38</sup>

Later in the year, in September, Vučić announced that he would award decorations to representatives of those states that voted against the Resolution on Srebrenica at the UN General Assembly, which he subsequently did.<sup>39</sup> In the same month, Aleksandar Vulin thanked Vladimir Putin, President of Russian Federation, in Vladivostok for his assistance in the fight against the adoption of the Resolution on the "fake genocide" in Srebrenica.<sup>40</sup> At the end of the year, during a rally of the Serbian Progressive Party, Vučić reiterated that the decision to designate a day of remembrance for the Srebrenica genocide had been made contrary to international law, and that at the UN, he had led "a brave fight of brave countries".<sup>41</sup> The year concluded with a competition announced by the Cultural Centre in Čuprija for painting a mural dedicated to Nebojša Pavković.

36 "Patrijarh Porfirije u Uskršnjoj poslanici: Rezolucijom pokušavaju da proglase srpski narod počiniocem genocida", nova.rs, 3 May 2024, <https://nova.rs/vesti/drustvo/patrijarh-porfirije-u-uskršnjoj-poslanici-rezolucijom-pokusavaju-da-proglase-srpski-narod-pocinicem-genocida/>

37 "Jovanović: Koalicija „NADA“ podneće skupštini Deklaraciju o Srebrenici", RTV, 9 July 2024, [https://www.rtv.rs/sr\\_lat/politika/stranacka-hronika/jovanovic-koalicija-nada-podnece-skupstini-deklaraciju-o-srebrenici\\_1553349.html](https://www.rtv.rs/sr_lat/politika/stranacka-hronika/jovanovic-koalicija-nada-podnece-skupstini-deklaraciju-o-srebrenici_1553349.html)

38 "Promocija knjige Aleksandra Pavića „Zabranjena istina o Srebrenici“ u Jagodini", Mi – Glas iz naroda, 23 December 2024, <https://misnaganaroda.rs/event/%d0%bf%d1%80%d0%be%d0%bc%d0%be%d1%86%d0%b8%d1%98%d0%b0-%d0%ba%d1%9a%d0%b8%d0%b3%d0%b5-%d0%b0%d0%bb%d0%b5%d0%ba%d1%81%d0%b0%d0%bd%d0%b4%d1%80%d0%b0-%d0%bf%d0%b0%d0%b2%d0%b8%d1%9b%d0%b0/>

39 "Vučić: Odlikovaću predstavnike država koji su u UN bili uz Srbiju po pitanju Srebrenice", N1, 23 September 2024, <https://n1info.rs/vesti/vucic-odlikovacu-predstavnike-drzava-koji-su-u-un-bili-uz-srbiju-po-pitanju-srebrenice/>

40 Esmir Milavić, "Vulin pred Putinom negirao genocid u Srebrenici i poručio: Srbija je saveznik Rusije, nikada neće biti članica NATO-a", N1, 4 september 2024, <https://n1info.ba/regija/vulin-pred-putinom-negirao-genocid-u-srebrenici-i-porucio-srbija-je-saveznik-rusije-nikada-nevere-biti-clanica-nato-a/>

41 Mina Izgarević, "Vučić poručio Nataši Kandić: Bolje ne biti ni u kakvoj vladi, nego u toj koja će da prizna genocid u Srebrenici", Novosti, 25 December 2024, <https://www.novosti.rs/vesti/politika/1443991/vucic-porucio-natasi-kandic-bolje-biti-kakvoj-vladi-nego-toj-koja-prizna-genocid-srebrenici>

# Proponents of War Crimes Denial

In line with a long-standing practice, the proponents of the narrative of denial are diverse and include a range of actors, from city assemblies and mayors to the highest levels of state leadership, headed by Aleksandar Vučić, who is often the initiator of such practices. His statements frequently serve as a model for other government representatives, who regularly present him as a defender of Serbian interest, the leader of small, freedom-loving nations, and even as the victim of specific crimes and the prevailing narratives surrounding, which was particularly evident during the campaign against the adoption of the Resolution on Srebrenica.

One of the most vocal proponents of denial is Aleksandar Vulin, currently Deputy Prime Minister of Serbia, whose rhetoric is often highly aggressive and marked by hate speech. For example, he referred to Tonino Picula, the European Parliament's rapporteur for Serbia, who commented on the tragedy at the Novi Sad Railway Station, as "Ustasha trash".<sup>42</sup> At the session of the National Assembly in September, while speaking about the 1999 NATO bombing of Serbia and the Kosovo war, he stated, among other things: "You can't say your country is responsible for the war (...) Kurti will be very pleased to say – Serbia acknowledged it is responsible, the Serbian government is responsible for bombing, you were bombed because of your policies, and then they'll continue – because of the expulsion of the Shiptars, that we didn't conduct an anti-terrorist operation in 1998, but we actually harassed peaceful locals...".<sup>43</sup>

Such practices are not uncommon among lower-ranking officials, either, including state secretaries Dejan Antić and Ljiljana Pavićević, as well as the director of the Post of Serbia, Zoran Anđelković, who contribute to the normalisation of war criminals in public sphere through television appearances alongside convicted war criminals or through their joint participation in various commemorative events.

Government ministries also frequently play a prominent role in denying war crimes. In 2024, the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs particularly stood out in this regard. This Ministry invited convicted war criminal Vladimir Lazarević on multiple occasions to deliver speeches at ceremonies for awarding veteran medals. The Ministry of Defense and the Serbian Army were also involved in promoting denial. The Ministry of Defense promoted its documentary Heroic 549th Motorized Brigade, while commemorative events and conferences marking the anniversary of the NATO bombing of Serbia were held in the Army Halls in

42 "Aleksandar Vulin je nazvao Tonina Piculu 'ustaškim dubretom', i to po direktivi njihovog šefa Aleksandra Vučića", nova.rs, 14 November 2024, <https://nova.rs/vesti/politika/aleksandar-vulin-je-nazvao-tonina-piculu-ustaskim-djubretom-i-to-po-direktivi-njihovog-sefa-aleksandra-vucica/>

43 "Vulin: Nacionalna izdaja je reći da je vlast u Beogradu bila odgovorna za bombardovanje Srbije", Politika, 24 September 2024, <https://www.politika.rs/sr/clanak/634211/Vulin-Nacionalna-izdaja-je-reci-da-je-vlast-u-Beogradu-bila-odgovorna-za-bombardovanje-Srbije>

Belgrade and Niš, with Lazarević taking part. The Army Hall in Niš also hosted the promotion of Nebojša Pavković's biography.

The proponents of the denial narrative are not limited to institutions. Certain opposition politicians also actively support it, such as Aleksandar Pavić and Branimir Nestorović (MPs from the party Us – Voice of People), and Miloš Jovanović (MP from the New Democratic Party of Serbia), who often deny specific crimes and/or glorify war criminals in their public appearances.

## Media Exploitation of the Perpetrators

The media exploitation of war criminals remains inevitable in the context of the high level of media and societal polarisation in Serbia. As in the previous two decades, convicted war criminals continued to feature prominently in the media landscape in 2024. The frequent provision of media space to such individuals results in regular media manipulation, as well as the relativization and denial of committed crimes, accompanied by numerous violations of the Serbian Journalists Code of Ethics<sup>44</sup>.

While only a handful of media outlets maintain a critical approach to topics such as war crimes, tabloids, including Informer, Kurir, Večernje novosti, Politika, Srpski telegraf, and Alo, routinely and deliberately invite convicted war criminals to comment on a broad range of issues. They are given space to speak on the socio-political situation in Serbia and beyond, often without any reference to their convictions by international tribunals or any discussion of their responsibility for war crimes.

According to research conducted by the Independent Association of Journalists of Serbia (NUNS), Srpski telegraf, Alo, Informer, Večernje novosti, Kurir, Blic and Politika received, through public tenders, contracts worth at least RSD 108 million in 2024. Furthermore, the Report on Monitoring the Compliance with the Serbian Journalists Code of Ethics in Daily Papers, published by the Press Council in 2024, recorded 2,579 breaches of the Code by these outlets. In the same year, the Complaints Commission of the Press Council issued 22 decisions on regarding violations of the Code by these media.<sup>45</sup>

According to an analysis conducted by Raskrinkavanje website operated by the Crime and Corruption Investigative Journalism Network (KRIK) in October 2024, the website of the Informer daily represents the most extensive hub within the right-wing media network. It is the recipient of approximately 20 million backlinks from the wide range of websites across the internet. The majority of backlinks originate from Večernje novosti (around 18 million), while Informer itself directs around 28 million links back to Večernje novosti. The analysis notes that these two websites form what is potentially the most powerful media "axle" among

44 Serbian Journalists' Code of Ethics, available at: <https://savetzastampu.rs/en/dokumenta/kodeks-novinara-srbije-3/>

45 "Više od 100 miliona dinara javnog novca za medije koji krše Kodeks", NUNS, 25 January 2025, <https://nuns.rs/preko-100-miliona-dinara-javnog-novca-za-medije-koji-krse-kodeks/>

Serbian internet portals, as close allies whose messages reach an enormous audience.<sup>46</sup>

The frequency of referencing, and consequently denying, certain war crimes was very high in 2024, particularly in light of developments such as the adoption of the Resolution on the Srebrenica genocide by the UN General Assembly<sup>47</sup>. Numerous public figures commented on this occasion, including Vojislav Šešelj<sup>48</sup> and Nikola Šainović<sup>49</sup>, both of whom described the resolution as “shameful” and denounced it as unfair. However, many media appearances by convicted war criminals in 2024 were unrelated to armed conflicts and the war crimes committed during the 1990s in the territory of the former Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia. There are numerous examples of these actors being invited onto various television programmes in the roles of analysts, political scientists, and commentators of relevance for providing insight into topics such as international politics or foreign armed conflicts. In the tabloid press, they are routinely presented as legitimate political actors, with no problematisation of their criminal background.

The most prominent example is the extensive media presence of Vojislav Šešelj, who was convicted by the IRMCT for crimes against humanity committed in Hrtkovci. According to a publication by the Regional Academy for Democratic Development from July 2024,<sup>50</sup> between April 2022 and August 2023 alone, Šešelj appeared in or was mentioned by the media approximately 60 times per month. In his still frequent media appearances, he is typically introduced as the president of the Serbian Radical Party,<sup>51</sup> and only exceptionally referred to as a marginalised politician and Hague convict.<sup>52</sup> He is invited to comment on a wide range of topics, from international relations and domestic affairs to matters of private life. When addressing war crimes, he resorts to denial<sup>53</sup> and relativisation, often portraying anyone who does not unconditionally support the current Serbian government as an enemy of

46 Marija Vučić, Vesna Radojević, “Desničarski univerzum u Srbiji: Ljuti konkurenti se najviše podržavaju, Informer najveće čvorište”, Raskrikavanje, KRIK, 14 October 2024, <https://www.raskrikavanje.rs/page.php?id=Desnicarski-univerzum-u-Srbiji-Ljuti-konkurenti-se-najise-podrzavaju-Informer-najvece-cvoriste-1404>

47 “Generalna skupština Ujedinjenih nacija usvojila Rezoluciju o Danu sjećanja na genocid u Srebrenici”, Radio Free Europe, 23 May 2024, <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/rezolucija-genocid-srebrenica-un/32961232.html>

48 “Dr Šešelj o Rezoluciji o Srebrenici: Sve nepravda do nepravde, sve kršenja prava i strašne laži”, TV Happy, 3 May 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4LJZKIGs6hw>

49 “Donošenje sramne rezolucije zapravo proističe iz jedne presude! Sve je počelo u Hagu!”, Informer, 30 May 2024, [https://informer.rs/tv/live-tv/911023/srebrenica-presuda-rezolucija-hag-zapad#google\\_vignette](https://informer.rs/tv/live-tv/911023/srebrenica-presuda-rezolucija-hag-zapad#google_vignette)

50 Jerkov, Aleksandra, Kako govorimo o ratnim zločinima? Analiza prisutnosti ratnih zločina, ratnih zločinaca i diskursa o ratnim zločinima u Srbiji. (Novi Sad: Regionalna akademija za razvoj demokratije, 2024), file:///C:/Users/PC/OneDrive/Desktop/inicijativa/Research/REKOM-PUBLIKACIJA.pdf

51 “Šešelj na Informer TV o padu Sirije: Neće to na dobro izaći!”, Informer, 8 December 2024, <https://informer.rs/tv/live-tv/969576/vojislav-seselj-sirija>

52 “Možda će se naći neka druga bratska služba” Šešelj prostački proziva dr Dragana Milića, ali bi hteo njegove odbornike: Ovo je odgovor koji je dobio”, Blic, 1 August 2024, <https://www.blic.rs/vesti/politika/seselj-je-dr-dragana-milica-nazvao-spijunom-a-hteo-bi-da-saradjuje-sa-njegovim/khv64c0>

53 “Bilo je vojnički ispravno gadati kolonu koja se kretala prema Tuzli” Šešelj šokirao: “Pisanje knjige o tome me umalo koštalo života...1200 žrtava nije puno!”, Kurir, 29 December 2024, <https://www.kurir.rs/vesti/politika/9541023/seselj-sokirao-izjavom-na-kurir-televiziji-pisanje-knjige-o-srebrenici-me-umalo-kostalo-zivota>

Serbia, and frequently inciting violence against critics of the government.<sup>54</sup>

Nikola Šainović, currently a high-ranking official of the Socialist Party of Serbia and a convicted war criminal for mass atrocities committed in Kosovo in 1999, frequently appears in various television programmes. He comments on a range of topics, including other war crimes,<sup>55</sup> the situation in Kosovo,<sup>5657</sup> US-Israel relations<sup>58</sup>, and even the actions of the Council of Europe,<sup>59</sup> consistently employing harmful, nationalist rhetoric and often portraying Serbs as victims. He is regularly introduced as a former Prime Minister, and this selective framing lends him, in the eyes of a poorly informed audience, the credibility needed to appear as an expert on these issues.

Vinko Pandurević, convicted for war crimes committed in Srebrenica in July 1995, was referred to as a war criminal in some media outlets in the past year. He gave an interview to BBC in Serbian, later republished by Danas<sup>60</sup>, in which he was presented as a general convicted of aiding and abetting crimes against humanity. However, he refuses to use the term “genocide” in reference to the crimes committed in Srebrenica in July 1995, which is a typical example of genocide denial and distortion of facts. Further, he was granted space to comment on the war in Ukraine, most frequently on Happy TV and in Večernje novosti,<sup>61</sup> and has also offered commentary on the actions of the US President Donald Trump in pro-government media outlets, such as Alo.<sup>62</sup>

54 “Mnogi žele da ukinu srpsku naciju! Moramo da se borimo i oružanim sredstvima ako ponovo dode do toga!”, Informer, 22 April 2024, <https://informer.rs/tv/live-tv/898611/vojislav-seselj-aleksandar-vranjes-info-jutro>

55 “Zajednički gazda je postrojio Muslimane i Hrvate i radikalno promenio odnos snaga u Bosni! Ni Rusija nas nije podržavala u to vreme!”, Informer, 4 August 2024, <https://informer.rs/tv/live-tv/931653/nikola-sainovic-zoran-andjelkovic-oluja-specijal>

56 “Kurti će ispasti heroj ako ga smene pred izbore! Amerikanci su dužni da sprovede Rezoluciju 1244 koju su sami predložili!”, Informer, 6 September 2024, [https://informer.rs/tv/live-tv/940910/nikola-sainovic-info-jutro#google\\_vignette](https://informer.rs/tv/live-tv/940910/nikola-sainovic-info-jutro#google_vignette)

57 “Već viđen obrazac: Šainović: Kada albanski lider na KiM-u izgubi podršku okreće se radikalnim stavovima i napadanju Srbije”, Kurir, 23 August 2024, <https://www.kurir.rs/vesti/politika/4429875/sainovic-kada-albanski-lider-na-kim-u-izgubi-podrsku-okrece-se-radikalnim-stavovima-i-napadanju-srbije>

58 “Izrael je stvorio atmosferu svemoći, ali ovaj rat je pokazao drugi odnos snaga! Vidljivo je da Amerikanci izbegavaju reč genocid!”, Informer, 13 June 2024, <https://informer.rs/tv/live-tv/915610/nikola-sainovic-nenad-vukovic-info-dan>

59 “Primanje lažne države Kosovo u Savet Evrope je akt disciplinovanja Evrope! Ovo nije prvi put da Evropljani menjaju stavove po naredjenju!”, Informer, 18 April 2024, <https://informer.rs/tv/live-tv/897355/nikola-sainovic-info-jutro>

60 “Rat u Bosni i Hercegovini i Srebrenica: Naučnica iz Srbije odlučna da imenuje i poslednju žrtvu”, Danas, 9 July 2024, <https://www.danas.rs/bbc-news-serbian/rat-u-bosni-i-hercegovini-i-srebrenica-naucnica-iz-srbije-odlucna-da-imenuje-i-poslednju-zrtvu/>

61 “General otkrio šta je glavna ruska meta: Šta će Ukrajinci uraditi kad izgube Časov Jar?”, Večernje novosti, 9. maj 2024, <https://www.novosti.rs/planeta/svet/1365267/general-otkrio-sta-je-glavna-ruska-meta-sta-ukrajinci-uraditi-kada-izgube-casov-jar>

62 “Tramp među Srbima: General Pandurević o mogućim potezima novoizabranog predsednika SAD”, Alo, 12 decembar 2024, <https://www.alo.rs/vesti/politika/994347/tramp-medu-srbima-general-pandurevic-o-mogucim-potezima-novoizabranog-predsednika-sad/vest>

# Aesthetic of Denial

Amidst the intensive campaign against the Resolution on Srebrenica, just days before the session of the UN General Assembly, the inscription “We Are Not a Genocidal People”, accompanied by the Serbian flag, appeared on the LED screens of the Kula Belgrade.<sup>63</sup> Shortly afterwards, billboards carrying a similar message – “We Are Not a Genocidal People. We Remember... Proud Serbia and Republika Srpska” were displayed throughout Belgrade, featuring the Serbian tricolour the state coat of arms of Serbia, and the coat of arms of Republika Srpska.<sup>64</sup> Banners bearing the slogan “Serbs Are Not a Genocidal People” were hung on overpasses from the Gazela bridge to Omladinskih brigada Street in Novi Beograd, each guarded by two men.<sup>65</sup>

Following the adoption of the Resolution, the names of 87 states that abstained or voted against it were inscribed on the steps leading to Gardoš Tower in Zemun.<sup>66</sup> Soon after, a large piece of graffiti appeared on a building in Knez Mihailova Street, bearing the inscription in English, “The only genocide in the Balkans was against the Serbs”, written on a black background and signed by the far-right group People’s Patrols.<sup>67</sup>

## Glorification of Convicted War Criminals

### Vladimir Lazarević

Almost traditionally, the convicted war criminal most frequently mentioned and glorified by government representatives – and regularly seen in their company - is Vladimir Lazarević.

At a ceremony in January awarding veteran medals to war veterans, disabled veterans, and families of fallen soldiers from the municipality of Apatin, Lazarević delivered a speech. The event was attended by Miloš Vučević, then Deputy Prime Minister and

63 “Srbi nisu genocidan narod”, Politika, 21 May 2024, <https://www.politika.rs/sr/clanak/615774/srbi-nisu-genocidan-narod>

64 “U Beogradu se pojavili bilbordi sa porukom da Srbi nisu genocidan narod”, Tanjug, 22 May 2024, <https://www.tanjug.rs/srbija/politika/89606/u-beogradu-se-pojavili-bilbordi-sa-porukom-da-srbi-nisu-genocidan-narod/vest>

65 “[Foto] Transparenti ‘Srbi nisu genocidan narod’ na Novom Beogradu, svaki čuvaju po dvojica muškaraca”, N1, 23 May 2024, <https://n1info.rs/vesti/foto-transparenti-srbi-nisu-genocidan-narod-na-novom-beogradu-svaki-cuvaju-po-dvojica-muskaraca/>

66 “Video ‘Kolektivna lobotomija’: Čuvene stepenice koje vode do Gardoša išarali imenima država koje su glasale protiv Rezolucije ili bile održane”, nova.rs, 1 June 2024, <https://nova.rs/vesti/politika/video-kolektivna-lobotomija-cuvene-stepenice-koje-vode-do-gardosa-isarali-imenima-drzava-koje-su-glasale-protiv-rezolucije-ili-bile-udrzane/>

67 “Grafit koji negira genocid u Srebrenici u centru Beograda”, Radio Free Europe, 4 June 2024, <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/srebrenica-grafit-genocid-srbija/32979146.html>

Minister of Defence, and Nikola Selaković, then Minister of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs.<sup>68</sup> For the same occasion in October, Lazarević appeared in Loznica, where veteran medals were awarded by state secretaries from the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs, Mile Rosić, Zoran Antić, Strahinja Erac, and Ninoslav Jovanović. The Deputy Mayor of Loznica, Petar Gavrilović, was also present.<sup>69</sup>

Lazarević was also one of the speakers featured in the documentary *Košare*, authored and self-produced by Đorđe Bojanić. The Institute for the Advancement of Education approved this documentary for use as a teaching tool.<sup>70</sup>

To mark the anniversary of the start of the NATO bombing of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY), a commemorative event was held at the Army Hall in Niš under the slogan “Not to Be Forgotten”, where Lazarević and Dejan Antić, State Secretary at the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs addressed the audience.<sup>71</sup>

Lazarević also spoke at the conference *From Aggression to a New Fair Order*, held at the Army Hall in Belgrade on 22 March. Other speakers included Miloš Vučević, Nikola Selaković, and Bratislav Gašić, who was then Minister of the Interior.<sup>72</sup> Two days later, on 24 March, at the state commemoration in Niš marking the anniversary of the NATO bombing, Lazarević again appeared as one of the speakers, alongside the same ministers.<sup>73</sup>

Shortly thereafter, in April, Lazarević participated in another state ceremony, this time in Kruševac, where he and Minister Nikola Selaković addressed the audience on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Battle of Košare.<sup>74</sup> One month later, Lazarević was a speaker at a panel discussion titled *Heroism and Humanity in the Defence of the Fatherland 1998–1999*, held in Niš and organised by the city committee of the Serbian Progressive Party. The panel was moderated by Dejan Antić, State Secretary at the Ministry of

68 “Dodeljene Boračke spomenice borcima, ratnim vojnim invalidima i pohodicama palih boraca sa teritorije opštine Apatin”, Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Serbia, 29 January 2024, <https://www.mod.gov.rs/cir/20904/dodeljene-boracke-spomenice-borcima-ratnim-vojn timer-invalidima-i-porodicama-palih-boraca-sa-teritorije-opstine-apatin20904>

69 “Dodeljene Boračke spomenice u Loznici”, Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, 11 October 2024, <https://www.minrzs.gov.rs/sr/aktuelnosti/obavestjenja/dodeljene-boracke-spomenice-u-loznici>

70 “Filmska lekcija o Košarama za dake starijih razreda”, RT Balkan, 5 April 2024, <https://lat.rt.rs/srbija-i-balkan/84016-film-djaci-kosare-skole/>

71 J. Čosin, “U Domu vojske u Nišu održan skup ‘Da se ne zaboravi’: Srbiji su hteli da pretvore u prah i pepeo”, *Novosti*, 21 March 2024, <https://www.novosti.rs/reportaze/vesti/1347042/domu-vojske-nisu-odrzan-skup-zaboravi-srbiju-hteli-pretvore-prah-pepeo>

72 “Ministar Vučević otvorio konferenciju ‘Od agresije do novog pravednog poretka’”, Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Serbia, 22 March 2024, <https://www.mod.gov.rs/lat/21068/ministar-vucevic-otvorio-konferenciju-od-agresije-do-novog-pravednog-poretka21068>

73 Z. Miladinović, “Cilj NATO agresije bio je primena Hitlerove doktrine blic kriga: General u penziji i haški osuđenik Vladimir Lazarević na državnoj komemoraciji”, *Danas*, 24 March 2024, <https://www.danas.rs/vesti/drustvo/cilj-nato-agresije-bio-je-primena-hitlerove-doktrine-blic-kriga-general-u-penziji-i-haski-osudjenik-vladimir-lazarevic-na-drzavnoj-komemoraciji/>

74 V.C. „Počast morcima 125. motorizovane brigade: Obeležavanje 25-godišnjice bitke na Košarama”, *Novosti*, 9 April 2024, <https://www.novosti.rs/c/drustvo/vesti/1354498/pocast-borcima-125-motorizovane-brigade-obelezavanje-25-godisnjice-bitke-kosarama>

Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs.<sup>75</sup>

In the same month, President of Serbia Aleksandar Vučić commented on TV PRVA regarding YIHR's criticism of the above-mentioned panel discussion in Niš, stating: "It would have been best to kill all those who were tortured, harassed, who were guilty of defending their country, like General Lazarević". He then added: "The man served his full sentence in prison. He even served time he should never have had to serve...".<sup>76</sup>

Soon afterwards, Lazarević appeared at the Vojvoda Petar Bojović barracks near Leskovac, where he attended a ceremony marking the anniversary of the beginning of the Battle of Paštrik and addressed the audience. Zoran Antić, State Secretary at the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs, was also present at the event.<sup>77</sup>

In October, Nikola Selaković, then serving as Minister of Culture, and Dejan Antić, State Secretary at the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs, together with Vladimir Lazarević, attended an event titled In the Footsteps of the Pledge and Freedom in Niš.<sup>78</sup>

\* Vladimir Lazarević was commander of the YA Priština Corps during the Kosovo war. He was sentenced by the ICTY to 14 years' imprisonment for crimes against humanity, specifically for the deportation and forcible removal of Albanian civilians in Kosovo.

## Vojislav Šešelj

Almost as prominent in the public sphere as Vladimir Lazarević, Vojislav Šešelj is a frequent guest on television stations aligned with the regime of Aleksandar Vučić and the Serbian Progressive Party. Although he does not attend official state ceremonies, his media appearances alongside government representatives and public officials, where he comments on current political affairs, are highly visible.

In May, Šešelj appeared on TV Pink with Milica Đurđević Stamenkovski, Minister for Family Welfare and Demography.<sup>79</sup> On the same

<sup>75</sup> Toma Todorović, "Srpski heroizam i čovečnost se večno pamte", Politika, 26 May 2024, <https://www.politika.rs/sr/clanak/616468/Srpski-heroizam-i-čovečnost-se-večno-pamte>

<sup>76</sup> "Vučić: U nemogućim uslovima smo uradili najviše za zemlju", Aleksandar Vučić Official YouTube channel, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wbsBpLiN5pQ>

<sup>77</sup> "Heroji sa Paštrika odbranili Srbiju! Obeleženo 25 godina od početka čuvene bitke", Informer, 27 May 2024, <https://informer.rs/drustvo/srbija/909915/srbija-godisnjica-pocetka-bitke-na-pastriku>

<sup>78</sup> Dejan Antić's official Instagram profile, 15 October 2024, [https://www.instagram.com/p/DBJi79cChcG/?igsh=MWltZXoxMXJhamZ0aw%3D%3D&img\\_index=1](https://www.instagram.com/p/DBJi79cChcG/?igsh=MWltZXoxMXJhamZ0aw%3D%3D&img_index=1)

<sup>79</sup> "Ministarka Đurđević Stamenkovski u Hit Tvitu poručila: Mi nismo genocidan narod, mi smo ponosni na našu zemlju i Republiku Srpsku", Informer, 26 May 2024, <https://informer.rs/politika/vesti/909637/ministarka-durdjevic-stamenkovski-u-hit-tvitu-porucila-mi-nismo-genocidni-narod-mi-smo-ponosi-na-nasu-zemlju-i-republiku-srpsku>

channel, he also appeared with Arnaud Gouillon, Director of the Government's Office for Public and Cultural Diplomacy.<sup>80</sup> He was featured alongside MP Aleksandar Pavić on TV Tanjug,<sup>81</sup> and with MP Vladimir Đukanović on TV Kurir.<sup>82</sup> In December, Šešelj was once again a guest on TV Kurir, alongside Livija Pavićević, State Secretary at the Ministry of Agriculture.<sup>83</sup>

During the campaign for the local elections in May, Šešelj handed out free copies of his books in Niš.<sup>84</sup> In October, his publishing house Greater Serbia maintained its traditional presence at the Belgrade International Book Fair, where he signed his books and took photographs with visitors.<sup>85</sup>

At the local elections held in June, the coalition led by the ruling Serbian Progressive Party included, among others, Šešelj's Serbian Radical Party.<sup>86</sup>

✳️ Vojislav Šešelj has served as President of the Serbian Radical Party for decades. The IRMCT sentenced him to 10 years' imprisonment for persecution and incitement to persecution, deportation, and the forcible removal of the Croats from the village of Hrtkovci in Vojvodina in 1992.

## Veselin Šljivančanin

Another convicted war criminal with a prominent presence in the public sphere is Veselin Šljivančanin. His high regard among government officials is evident in the promotion of his book *This Is My Country, I am in Command Here*, organised by the Bor City Assembly at the town's Cultural Centre in February. The President of the Bor City Assembly, Dragan Žikić, personally addressed

80 "Šešelj o postupanju nekih nakon tragedije koja je pogodila Srbiju: Gazili bi preko leševa zbog svoje pohlepe", pink.rs, 3 November 2024, <https://www.pink.rs/politika/638910/seselj-o-postupanju-nekih-nakon-tragedije-koja-je-pogodila-srbiju-%27gazili-bi-preko-leseva-zbog-svoje-pohlepe%27>

81 "Šešelj upozorava: Sadašnja američka vlast želi veliki rat, ali da ginu Evropljani", Novosti, 17 November 2024, <https://www.novosti.rs/vesti/politika/1430343/seselj-upozorava-sadasnja-americka-vlast-zeli-veliki-rat-ali-ginu-evropljani>

82 "Napeto u studiju Kurir televizije! Advokat Đukanović: Ovo što je izvedeno sa Vesićem, to je vrsta mini državnog udara! Jasno je da je ovo politička odmazda", Kurir, 24 November 2024, <https://www.kurir.rs/vesti/politika/9504776/vladimir-djukanovic-i-vojslav-seseslj-u-emisiji-puls-srbije-vikend>

83 "Ošamari ga, da ne ustajem! Varnice pred kamerama Kurira, Šešelj ovim rečima izazvao haos u studiju: Lažovčino jedna, zašto te zovu Sisoje?", Kurir, 22 December 2024, <https://www.kurir.rs/vesti/politika/9534291/varnice-pred-kamerama-kurira-seselj-ovim-recima-izazvao-haos-u-studiju-zasto-te-zovu-sisoje>

84 Mirjana R. Milenković, "Zašto je Šešelj nišlijama besplatno delio svoje knjige?", Danas, 23 May 2024, <https://www.danas.rs/vesti/politika/seselj-nis-knjige-kampanja-sagovornici/>

85 Slavko Rokсандić, "Navalili četnici kod vojvode Šešelja Hit snimak sa sajma knjiga", Alo, 24 October 2024, <https://www.alo.rs/vesti/politika/973030/navalili-cetnici-kod-vojvode-seselja-hit-snimak-sa-sajma-knjiga/vest>

86 "Šapić prvi na listi koalicije oko SNS za beogradske izbore", RTS, 8 April 2024, <https://www.rts.rs/lat/vesti/politika/5409677/sapic-prvi-na-listi-koalicije-okolo-sns-za-beogradske-izbore.html>

the audience at the event.<sup>87</sup> Šljivančanin promoted his book at the Cultural Centre in Zaječar later that year, where the Mayor of Zaječar, Boško Ničić, addressed the audience.<sup>88</sup>

Darko Glišić, Minister for Public Investments, while discussing the potential reintroduction of mandatory military service on TV Kurir in September, reflected on his time in the army and said: "The commander under whom I made my oath was, at that time in the rank of lieutenant colonel, Veselin Šljivančanin and I am very proud of that fact".<sup>89</sup> MP Milovan Drecun also appeared on TV Informer in Šljivančanin's company.<sup>90</sup>

"The Assembly of Krajišniks" was held in Kovilovo in September. The event was attended by Prime Minister Miloš Vučević and the President of the Vojvodina Government, Maja Gojković. Sandra Božić, Vice President of the Provincial Government, was also present and used the opportunity to take a photo with Šljivančanin, as well as with Žika Ivanović and Radojica Božović of the veterans' association Red Berets, a unit whose members are suspected of committing war crimes in BiH.<sup>91</sup>

✳ During the 1990s, Veselin Šljivančanin served as an officer of the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) and later the YA, and was one of the commanders of JNA forces during the battles in Vukovar in 1991. The ICTY sentenced him to ten years' imprisonment for war crimes against wounded Croatian soldiers and prisoners of war at the Ovčara farm near Vukovar.

## Nebojša Pavković

Despite the fact that Nebojša Pavković has not been in Serbia for years, serving his prison sentence in Finland, he is frequently mentioned as a hero in Serbian public discourse. His biography, *Unbreakable Link*, written by Miodrag Jevtić, was promoted on multiple occasions during 2024. The book was presented at the Army Hall in Niš, the Cultural centre in Aleksinac, the Book Fair in Novi Sad, and at the hall of the local community administration in Belgrade's Zvezdara municipality.<sup>92</sup> One such promotion was attended by Aleksandar Vulin, Deputy Prime Minister, who stated: "General Pavković's conviction and imprisonment by the Hague

87 Branislava Stević, "Promocija knjige 'Ovo je moja zemlja, ovde ja komandujem'", Radio televizija Bor, 22 February 2024, <https://rtvbor.rs/promocija-knjige-ovo-je-moja-zemlja-ovde-ja-komandujem/>

88 "Veselin Šljivančanin održao tribinu u Zaječaru i predstavio knjigu 'Ovo je moja zemlja, ovde ja komandujem' (foto + video)", Timočka, 25 December 2024, <https://www.timocka.rs/vesti/veselin-sljivancanin-odrzao-tribinu-u-zajecaru-i-predstavio-knjigu-ovo-je-moja-zemlja-ovde-ja-komandujem/>

89 "Srbija u izazovima: Šta se odlučilo na sednici Vlade na kojoj je bio i predsednik Aleksandar Vučić?", Kurir YouTube channel, 20 September 2024, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=13H7bCs\\_ahY&t=2039s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=13H7bCs_ahY&t=2039s)

90 "Specijal o generalu Pavkoviću! Nisu ga slomili u zatvoru! Govorio je vojsci Za mnom...", Informer, YouTube channel, 8 September 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4EyefsMCq0Q>

91 Sandra Božić's official Instagram profile, 29 September 2024, [https://www.instagram.com/p/DAf83RQtQXZ/?img\\_index=5](https://www.instagram.com/p/DAf83RQtQXZ/?img_index=5)

92 Tomislav Marković, "Povratak vojnog roka: Mašina za mljevenje topovskog mesa", Al Jazeera Balkans, 29 September 2024, <https://balkans.aljazeera.net/opinions/2024/9/29/povratak-vojnog-roka-masina-za-mljevenje-topovskog-mesa>

Tribunal is not justice or judgment, it is the revenge of the Western world, the NATO pact, for heroic resistance and for our country not being broken”.<sup>93</sup>

In December, the Cultural Centre in Čuprija announced a competition for the design and painting of a mural dedicated to Nebojša Pavković, offering a monetary award of RSD 330,000 to the winner.<sup>94</sup>

\* During the Kosovo war, Nebojša Pavković served as commander of the YA Third Army. The ICTY sentenced him to 22 years' imprisonment for crimes against humanity committed against Kosovo Albanians in 1999. He was found responsible for deportations, other inhumane acts, murders and persecution – acts constituting crimes against humanity, as well as for murders that violated the laws and customs of warfare.

## Nikola Šainović

Nikola Šainović attended the previously mentioned conference From Aggression to a New Fair Order in March, alongside deputy prime ministers and ministers of the Government of Serbia.<sup>95</sup>

Zoran Anđelković, Director of the Post of Serbia, also appeared with Šainović on TV Informer.<sup>96</sup>

\* During the 1990s, Nikola Šainović served as Prime Minister of Serbia and later as Deputy Prime Minister of the FRY. The ICTY sentenced him to 18 years' imprisonment for crimes against humanity and for violations of the laws and customs of warfare committed in Kosovo.

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93 “Vulin na promociji Pavkovićeve biografije: NJegova haška robija je NATO osveta za herojski otpor”, Novosti, 18 September 2024, <https://www.novosti.rs/vesti/politika/1410404/vulin-promociji-pavkoviceve-biografije-njegova-haska-robija-nato-osveta-herojski-otpor>

94 Zorana Rašić, “General Pavković dobiće mural: Ustanova kulture Čuprija raspisala konkurs”, Novosti, 12 December 2024, <https://www.novosti.rs/srbija/vesti/1439438/general-pavkovic-dobice-mural-ustanova-kulture-cuprija-raspisala-konkurs>

95 Dušan Komarčević, “‘Restauracija’ Miloševića na godišnjicu NATO bombardovanja”, Radio Free Europe, 25 March 2024, <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/nato-bombardovanje-srbija-jugoslavija/32874649.html>

96 “Zajednički gazda je postrojio Hrvate i muslimane i radikalno promenio odnos snaga u Bosni! Ni Rusija nas nije podržavala u to vreme! [video]”, Informer, 4 August 2024, <https://informer.rs/tv/live-tv/931653/nikola-sainovic-zoran-andjelkovic-oluja-specijal>

## Vinko Pandurević

In November and December, Pandurević appeared on TV Kurir alongside MP Aleksandar Pavić,<sup>97</sup> and on TV Happy with MP Dragan Stanojević.<sup>98</sup>

✳ During the war in BiH, Vinko Pandurević served as commander of the Zvornik Brigade of the Republika Srpska Army, He was sentenced by the ICTY to 13 years' imprisonment for aiding and abetting the murder, extermination, and persecution of Muslims from Srebrenica.

## Dragan Vasiljković

In September, Dragan Vasiljković and Livija Pavićević, State Secretary at the Ministry of Agriculture, appeared together on TV Informer.<sup>99</sup>

✳ Dragan Vasiljković, known as Captain Dragan, was the founder and leader of the Serb paramilitary unit Knindžas during the war in Croatia. He was sentenced in Croatia to 13 years' imprisonment for crimes against Croatian civilians and prisoners of war.

## Franko Simatović Frenki

Jovica Stanišić, head of the State Intelligence Service of the FRY, and Franko Simatović, a senior officer of the FRY State Intelligence Service, were found guilty by the IRMCT in May 2023 of crimes against humanity in BiH and Croatia.

Research conducted by the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN) in 2024 revealed that Franko Simatović's sons, Igor and Mario, are engaged in business relations with controversial arms trader Slobodan Tešić, through his associates and companies.<sup>100</sup> The company East Iron d.o.o., in which the Simatović brothers hold share, is seeking to recover EUR 10 million from Libya, based on

97 "Kako je Priština dočekala Trampovu pobjedu – gledajte u današnjoj emisiji 'NI 5 NI 6'", Kurir, 6 November 2024, <https://www.kurir.rs/vesti/drustvo/9485917/kako-je-pristina-docekala-trampovu-pobjedu-gledajte-u-danasnjoj-emisiji-ni-5-ni-6>

98 "Aktuelnosti" na Happy TV: Specijalna vojna operacija, dan 1023!", Happy TV, 12 December 2024, <https://happytv.rs/aktuelnosti/aktuelnosti-na-happy-tv-specijalna-vojna-operacija-dan-1023/792142/>

99 "Ostavljam pasoš, posle ovoga plašim se da predem granicu! Jovan Cvetic govorio o sramnoj optužbi iz Hrvatske!", Informer, 2 September 2024, <https://informer.rs/tv/live-tv/939715/jovan-cvetic-grcka-hapsenje>

100 Saša Dragojlo, "Frenkijevi sinovi: Veze sa saradnicima Slobodana Tešića i firmama na crnoj listi", BIRN, 24 July 2024, <https://birn.rs/sinovi-frenkija-simatovica-u-biznisu-sa-oruzjem/>

a debt for weapons.<sup>101</sup> The arms deal with Libya was concluded in 2014, following a visit by a Libyan delegation to Serbia’s Ministry of Defence.<sup>102</sup> The intermediary in this deal was Charso Limited, owned by Slobodan Tešić.<sup>103</sup> In 2018, East Iron d.o.o. took over the claim from Charso Limited. It was later agreed that the Republic of Serbia would settle the debt by offsetting it against Libya’s outstanding loans from the time of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.<sup>104</sup>

In October 2024, Government of Serbia appointed Mario Simatović, Franko’s younger son, as a member of the Board of Directors of the National Mortgage Insurance Corporation.<sup>105</sup> Previously, Mario Simatović had served on the Supervisory Board of the state-owned enterprise MSK a.d. Kikinda, and was also employed, without public competition, by the Civil Aviation Directorate.<sup>106</sup>

In 2013, the ICTY Trial Chamber acquitted Stanišić and Simatović. However, in 2021, the IRMCT Trial Chamber rendered a judgment finding them guilty. On that occasion, Aleksandar Vučić stated that the judgment was “true image of the political activity of the Hague Tribunal”, while Ivica Dačić, then President of the National Assembly, commented that Stanišić and Simatović were not guilty, describing the judgment as an attempt by the court to impose collective guilt on Serbia.<sup>107</sup> Aleksandar Vulin, at the time Minister of the Interior, stated that this judgment aimed to condemn the Serbian people and that the ICTY and the IRMCT had been established precisely to put the Serbs and the Serbian people as a whole on trial.<sup>108</sup>

Although the children of war criminals bear no guilt or responsibility for the actions of their parents, the business dealings of Franko Simatović’s sons – including contracts with the state and roles in state enterprises – together with the reaction of high-ranking officials to the 2021 judgment, raise concerns about the relationship between convicted war criminals and the highest level of government.

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101 Ibid.

102 Ibid.

103 Ibid.

104 Ibid.

105 Jelena Bulajić, “Sin Frenkija Simatovića, trgovac oružjem, dobio visoku funkciju u državnoj korporaciji za kredite”, nova.rs, 15. oktobar 2024, <https://nova.rs/vesti/biznis/sin-frenkija-simatovica-trgovac-oruzjem-dobio-visoku-funkciju-u-drzavnoj-korporaciji-za-kredite/>

106 Ibid.

107 “Vučić o presudi Stanišići i Simatoviću”, HRT, 1 July 2021, <https://vijesti.hrt.hr/svijet/vucic-o-presudi-stanisicu-i-simatovicu-2243295>

108 “Vulin za Pink o presudi Stanišiću i Simatoviću: Ovo treba da posluži kako bi se osudio narod Srbije! Hag je dodatno posvadao ljude na Balkanu!”, pink.rs, <https://pink.rs/politika/313084/vulin-za-pink-o-presudi-stanisicu-i-simatovicu-ovo-treba-da-posluzi-kako-bi-se-osudio-narod-srbije-hag-je-dodatno-posvadjaoljude-na-balkanu>

# Denial Practices Regarding Specific War Crimes

## Srebrenica Genocide

The most frequently denied war crime in Serbia is, as a rule, the Srebrenica genocide, and 2024 was no exception. However, following the adoption of a resolution by the UN General Assembly on 23 May, designating 11 July as the International Day of Reflection and Commemoration of the 1995 Genocide in Srebrenica, and condemning any denial of the genocide and glorification of its perpetrators, the topic of the Srebrenica genocide became more present than usual in the public sphere and in the statements of state officials. Moreover, the adoption of the Resolution and the developments leading up to it prompted a large-scale campaign of genocide denial in Serbia. The leader of the campaign, and the foremost proponent of genocide denial, was the President of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić.

In April, speaking about the proposal of the Resolution, Vučić said: “We have the judgment, *res iudicata* – you can’t try the same thing twice. What I want to say, that’s not the issue. The real issue is moral: every textbook will say that someone did it. They will not be able to say Serbia, but they’ll say the Serbs did it. And that we have to give up on our brothers now”.<sup>109</sup>

Further criticising the possible adoption of the Resolution, Vučić made false claims about previously adopted UN resolutions dealing with genocide: “This adoption of the resolution is so unfair because the general resolution on genocide has already been adopted; there’s no need to adopt a separate one. Can you imagine that there is no such an enactment at the UN stating that Germany committed genocide in the Second World War? It doesn’t exist, it’s never been adopted. Then you understand”.<sup>110</sup> Contrary to his claims, in January 2022, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution condemning Holocaust denial, explicitly linking the suffering of Jews in the Second World War to Nazi Germany and its allies.<sup>111</sup>

An integral part of the Serbian authorities’ rhetoric and efforts to oppose the adoption of the Resolution were warnings about

109 “Vučić o rezoluciji o Srebrenici: I da izgubimo, za njih će to biti Pirova pobjeda!”, *Informer*, 6 April 2024, <https://informer.rs/politika/vesti/893541/vucic-o-rezoluciji-o-srebrenici-i-da-izgubimo-za-njih-ce-to-biti-pirova-pobjeda>

110 “Vučić, činjenice i manipulacije: Dok se čeka Rezolucija o Srebrenici već postoje pojedinačne o genocidu u Ruandi i holokaustu”, *Danas*, 6 April 2024, <https://www.danas.rs/svet/region/vucic-cinjenice-i-manipulacije-dok-se-čeka-rezolucija-o-srebrenici-vec-postoje-pojedinacne-o-genocidu-u-ruandi-i-holokaustu/>

111 See Resolution A/RES/76/250, available at: <https://docs.un.org/en/A/RES/76/250>

the alleged consequences, should it have been passed. President Vučić explained to citizens that following the adoption of the Resolution, attempts to dismantle Republika Srpska would ensue, and that Serbia would be required to pay war reparations. He claimed that one of the goals of the Resolution was “to punish the Serbs for pursuing a freedom-loving and independent policy, to subject Serbia to additional pressure with regard to Kosovo and Metohija, as well as its foreign policy orientation”.<sup>112</sup> In an address in late April, Vučić stated that the proposed resolution represented “a brutal trampling of the Dayton Peace Agreement”, reiterating that the aim of the regime in Sarajevo was “a claim for compensation, war reparations”.<sup>113</sup>

When reminded by a journalist of the International Court of Justice ruling which found Serbia guilty of failing to prevent the Srebrenica genocide, Vučić responded: “This is not true, don’t make things up. It was established that Serbia is in no way responsible for genocide, just so you know. Don’t deceive people like you deceive people in Sarajevo, saying that I carried a sniper rifle, that I shot someone”.<sup>114</sup>

Amidst the campaign against the Resolution on Srebrenica, President Vučić delivered a speech titled Revision of Historical Facts and Resistance by Freedom-Loving Nations at the Russian Cultural Centre, where he declared that at the UN General Assembly in New York, he would “fight for truth”. He claimed that historical revisionism was underway, with attempts to construct and impose particular narratives about 20th-century events, and stated that Serbia had long faced efforts to deny the genocide committed against the Serbs during the Second World War.<sup>115</sup> Russian Ambassador Alexander Botsan-Kharchenko thanked Vučić for his speech and remarked that the Resolution on Srebrenica was part of a broader “distortion of history”.<sup>116</sup> Drawing attention to the suffering of the Serbs, particularly during the Second World War, is a frequent strategy in the denial of the Srebrenica genocide, and it was a prominent feature of the campaign against the Resolution.

On the day of the vote at the UN General Assembly, when the Resolution was adopted, Vučić wrapped himself in the Serbian flag. When asked by the president and security personnel to remove it, he said: “No one in the world will take my flag away from me”.<sup>117</sup> He later commented on the outcome of the vote: “Some people wanted to abuse political power and politicise this topic”.<sup>118</sup> As 84

112 “Srbi ponovo na optuženičkoj klupi u UN”, *Politika*, 7 April 2024, <https://www.politika.rs/sr/clanak/607986/Srbi-ponovo-na-optuzenickoj-klupi-u-UN>

113 “Obraćanje predsednika Srbije Aleksandra Vučića”, *Vecernje novosti* YouTube channel, 29 April 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qjy42ZE54Mo>

114 “[Video] Vučić u polemici s jednom novinarkom, Dodik vredjao drugu: ‘Vidi ti one krave sa N1’”, *N1*, 16 April 2024, <https://n1info.rs/vesti/video-vucic-u-polemici-s-jednom-novinarkom-dodik-vredjao-drugu-vidi-ti-one-krave-sa-n1/>

115 “Vučić: Biću ponovo u Njujorku od četvrtka do nedelje; Srbija zahvatna Rusiji koja brani istorijsku nauku od revizionista”, *Tanjug*, 15 May 2024, <https://www.tanjug.rs/srbija/politika/88476/vucic-bicu-ponovo-u-njujorku-od-četvrtka-do-nedelje-srbija-zahvatna-rusiji-koja-brani-istorijsku-nauku-od-revizionista/vest>

116 *Ibid.*

117 “Generalna skupština usvojila rezoluciju o Srebrenici – 84 za, 19 protiv, 68 uzdržano; Vučić: Ovo će otvoriti Pandorinu kutiju”, *RTS*, 23 May 2024, <https://www.rts.rs/lat/vesti/politika/5446999/rezolucija-o-srebrenici-un-generalna-skupstina.html>

118 *Ibid.*

states voted in favour of the adoption of the Resolution, while 109 were either against, abstained, or absent, Vučić described the result as a “victory” of Serbian diplomacy, stating that “the people who wanted to stigmatise the Serbian people have failed; they wanted to brand us, and they failed”.<sup>119</sup> Prime Minister Miloš Vučević and all ministers, draped in Serbian flags, watched the live broadcast of the General Assembly session at the General Secretariat of the President of the Republic, with Vučević’s message displayed: “Support to President Vučić in his relentless fight for our people and our state! Long live Serbia and Republika Srpska forever!”.<sup>120</sup>

During his stay in New York for the UN General Assembly session in September, Vučić announced that he would award decorations to representatives of the states that voted against the Resolution on Srebrenica and commented: “I see that some people are upset because we are decorating those who defended international law and who defended Serbia. But this is our decision, our internal matter, and an issue of our sovereignty. I can see they would love to prohibit it”.<sup>121</sup> Vučić first awarded the Order of the Serbian Flag, First Class, to the Permanent Representative of Russia to the UN, Vasily Nebenzya, and subsequently decorated the representatives of the United Arab Emirates and Hungary.<sup>122</sup>

In response to comments by the European Parliament’s rapporteur for Serbia, Tonino Picula, regarding the collapse of the canopy in Novi Sad on 1 November and the protests that followed, Vučić stated that Picula would find partners for dialogue in Belgrade, “among civil society and opposition parties who agree with him that Kosovo is independent, that Serbia committed genocide in Srebrenica, and that genocide did not occur in Jasenovac”.<sup>123</sup>

In a BBC interview in November, Vučić emphasised that he was always ready to acknowledge that “a horrible massacre occurred in Srebrenica”, adding that he had even gone to pay respect to the victims.<sup>124</sup> When asked by the journalist whether he would use the word genocide to describe Srebrenica, Vučić replied that he did not believe “in that narrative, because it will only fuel further disputes and complicate political relations”.<sup>125</sup>

119 Ibid.

120 “Sloga biće poraz vragu”: Ministri ogrnuti zastavama gledali prenos Generalne skupštine UN”, N1, 23 May 2024, <https://n1info.rs/vesti/sloga-bice-poraz-vragu-ministri-ogrnuti-zastavama-gledali-prenos-generalne-skupstine-un/>

121 “Vučić: Odlikovaću predstavnike država koji su u UN bili uz Srbiju po pitanju Srebrenice”, N1, 23 September 2024, <https://n1info.rs/vesti/vucic-odlikovacu-predstavnike-drzava-koji-su-u-un-bili-uz-srbiju-po-pitanju-srebrenice/>

122 “Vučić dodelio odlikovanja u Njujorku Ordenje dobili predstavnici UAE, Rusije i Mađarske pri UN (foto, video)”, Blic, 27 September 2024, <https://www.blic.rs/vesti/politika/vucic-odlikovao-predstavnici-uae-rusije-i-madarske/enpwky1>

123 “Vučić poslušao Vulina: Sa Piculom će razgovarati Tanja Mišćević”, N1, 14 November 2024, <https://n1info.rs/vesti/vucic-poslusao-vulina-sa-piculom-ce-razgovarati-tanja-miscevic/>

124 “Aleksandar Vučić za ‘Hardtalk’: Ide li Srbija ka Zapadu ili Rusiji i Kini?” BBC News na srpskom, YouTube channel, 25 November 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2JtmbZD3nfM>

125 Ibid.

Toward the end of the year, in response to mass protests in Serbia, the Serbian Progressive Party organised a rally in Belgrade titled Future, Not Past, where Vučić addressed the audience and, among other things, commented on the adoption of the Resolution on Srebrenica: “In May, contrary to all the rules of international law, they decided to designate a day to commemorate the Srebrenica genocide. We stood against it, and everyone told me ‘They’ll never forgive you for this’, because I led a brave fight alongside brave countries to stand up to the most powerful”.<sup>126</sup>

In addition to Vučić, Aleksandar Vulin was among the most senior state officials to take an active part in the campaign against the Resolution. Back in March, Vulin stated: “Of all the countries in the world, Germany is the one declaring the Serbs a genocidal people”, warning that the adoption of the Resolution would lead to the dismantling of Republika Srpska, and that Serbia would have to pay war reparations “to almost the entire Balkans”.<sup>127</sup> He continued in the same tone in the following months: “This is a horrible and enormous lie. It is disgustingly ironic that Germany accuses Serbia, after two world wars and tens of millions of victims caused by Germany and its allies, and they accuse Serbia of genocide”.<sup>128</sup> It was later claimed that Germany uses its financial and political influence to order other countries into voting a certain way at the UN General Assembly.<sup>129</sup>

At the Economic Forum in Vladivostok in September, Vulin thanked Russian President Vladimir Putin: “I am very grateful for the opportunity to tell you this and to thank you once again for your significant personal contribution to our relations, as well as for your significant personal contribution to the preservation of truth, and for helping us successfully fight against the attempts to pass a resolution on the fake genocide in Srebrenica”.<sup>130</sup>

Serbian Prime Minister Miloš Vučević attended a commemoration for the victims of the Jasenovac concentration camp in Donja Gradina. Commenting on the suffering of the Serbs in this camp, he said: “A people who survived this cannot be a people of executioners, but a people of victims”, adding that those who accuse the Serbs of committing genocide in Srebrenica should apologise for the crimes committed against the Serbs. He announced that Serbia would continue its efforts to oppose the adoption

<sup>126</sup> Mina Izgarević, “Vučić poručio Nataši Kandić: Bolje ne biti ni u kakvoj vladi, nego u toj koja će da prizna genocid u Srebrenici”, *Novosti*, 25 December 2024, <https://www.novosti.rs/vesti/politika/1443991/vucic-porucio-natasi-kandic-bolje-biti-kakvoj-vladi-nego-toj-koja-prizna-genocid-srebrenici>

<sup>127</sup> “Vulin: U državnom okruženju Vučića ima ljudi koji rade za CIA i on to zna”, *N1*, 27 March 2024, <https://n1info.rs/vesti/vulin-u-drzavnom-okruzenju-vucica-ima-ljudi-koji-rade-za-cia-i-on-to-zna/>

<sup>128</sup> “Vulin: Glasanje o rezoluciji o Srebrenici je glasanje o Srbiji i srpskom narodu”, *RTV*, 27 April 2024, [https://www.rtv.rs/sr\\_lat/politika/vulin-glasanje-o-rezoluciji-o-srebrenici-je-glasanje-o-srbiji-i-srpskom-narodu\\_1535761.html](https://www.rtv.rs/sr_lat/politika/vulin-glasanje-o-rezoluciji-o-srebrenici-je-glasanje-o-srbiji-i-srpskom-narodu_1535761.html)

<sup>129</sup> “Aleksandar Vulin – ‘2004. godine su ubijali naš narod 2 dana na KiM, mi nismo uradili ništa’”, *Jutarnji program TV Happy*, YouTube channel, 15 May 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bvp1Jvod1ko&t=1587s>

<sup>130</sup> Esmir Milavić, “Vulin pred Putinom negirao genocid u Srebrenici i poručio: Srbija je saveznik Rusije, nikada neće biti članica NATO-a”, *N1*, 4 September 2024, <https://n1info.ba/regija/vulin-pred-putinom-negirao-genocid-u-srebrenici-i-porucio-srbija-je-saveznik-rusije-nikada-nece-biti-clanica-nato-a/>

of the Resolution in Srebrenica.<sup>131</sup> Milorad Dodik, President of Republika Srpska, and Andirja Mandić, President of the Montenegrin Parliament, also attended the commemoration, both resolutely denying the Srebrenica genocide.

Ana Brnabić, at the time serving as Prime Minister, also played an active role in the campaign against the Resolution. In April, the Serbian Progressive Party issued a press release quoting Brnabić as stating that the Resolution aimed to impose the narrative that Republika Srpska is a genocidal creation, that the Serbs are a genocidal nation, and that Aleksandar Vučić is a genocidist. She repeatedly emphasised the suffering of the Serbs during the Second World War in the Independent State of Croatia.<sup>132</sup> During the campaign, she also referred to “leading genocide scholars”, who consider the events in Srebrenica to constitute a war crime rather than genocide.<sup>133</sup>

Later, appearing on TV Kurir, Brnabić stated that Serbia’s opposition to the adoption of the Resolution was “the most difficult fight Serbia has faced”, and that Aleksandar Vučić, upon learning about the Resolution, immediately “informed the public that the Resolution seeks to impose the most severe political and moral label on our people, that we are genocidal”.<sup>134</sup>

In response to the Resolution on Srebrenica, a rally titled Srpska Is Calling You was held in Banja Luka in April. The rally was organised by the authorities of Republika Srpska and attended by Serbian government representatives Ana Brnabić, Nikola Selaković, Milica Đurđević Stamenkovski, and Aleksandra Vulin. In line with her previous statements, Ana Brnabić declared: “Those who sponsor this Resolution at the UN, they are not interested in mourning or paying respect to victims of war crimes. What they demand is the harshest possible qualification, both moral and legal, against the entire Serbian people”.<sup>135</sup> At the same rally, the audience was addressed by Milica Đurđević Stamenkovski, who was soon after appointed Minister for Family Welfare and Demography. She sought to discredit the sponsors of the Resolution by invoking their history and went on to claim that their true aim was the “dehumanisation” of the Serbian people and the undermining of the foundations of Republika Srpska.<sup>136</sup>

Discrediting the sponsors of the Resolution and redirecting attention to the suffering of the Serbs also featured in the statement by Veljko Odalović, President of the Commission for Missing Persons of the Government of Serbia. On the day of the vote, Odalović

131 “Dodik i Vučević komemorirali žrtve Jasenovca i negirali genocid u Srebrenici”, Al Jazeera Balkans, 12 May 2024, <https://balkans.aljazeera.net/news/balkan/2024/5/12/dodik-i-vucevic-komemorirali-zrtve-jasenovca-i-negirali-genocid-u-srebrenici>

132 “Brnabić: Vučić je i sam žrtva genocida nad srpskim narodom”, Serbian Progressive Party, 13 April 2024, <https://sns.org.rs/tat/novosti/saopstenja/brnabic-vucic-je-i-sam-zrtva-genocida-nad-srpskim-narodom>

133 “Brnabić: Rezolucija o Srebrenici imaće posledice po Srbiju, ali i po svet”, Politika, 20 April 2024, <https://www.politika.rs/scc/clanak/610435/Brnabic-Rezolucija-o-Srebrenici-imaće-posledice-po-Srbiju-ali-i-po-svet>

134 “Brnabić: Predsednik Vučić nastavlja borbu u Njujorku”, Serbian Progressive Party, 14 May 2024, <https://sns.org.rs/novosti/vesti/brnabic-predsednik-vucic-nastavlja-borbu-u-njujorku>

135 “Narodni miting ‘Srpska te zove’, Banjaluka”, RTRS, YouTube channel, 18 April 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=drW6wPTA4KU>

136 Ibid.

stated that the sponsors of the Resolutions were the same states that had controlled areas in Kosovo where the greatest suffering of the Serbs occurred, and that these were also the states promoting Kosovo's independence.<sup>137</sup>

Ivica Dačić, then Minister of Foreign Affairs, reiterated the usual claims that the Resolution labels the Serbs as a genocidal nation. He also argued that the crime in Srebrenica could not be characterised as genocide because it took place within the territory of a single municipality, and not across the entirety of BiH.<sup>138</sup> Later, he objected to Montenegro's announcement that it would vote in favour of the Resolution, calling it "shameful and outrageous".<sup>139</sup> In her article published in the daily *Politika*, Minister of Justice Maja Popović wrote that the Resolution prioritises the suffering of the Bosniaks, while denying the suffering of the Serbs during the war in BiH. She claimed the Resolution seeks to stigmatise the Serbian people and asserted that genocidal intent of the perpetrators had never been proven in the case of Srebrenica. She described the characterisation of the Srebrenica events as genocide as "intolerable, false and legally unacceptable" and challenged the number of victims.<sup>140</sup>

In a similar vein, Sandra Božić, then Vice President of the National Assembly, stated that the Resolution represented an attempt to "put the label of a genocidal people" on the Serbs, and that "Serb victims are regarded as less significant and of lower worth". She denied the qualification of the crime in Srebrenica as genocide, describing it as a "political portmanteau invented for political purposes".<sup>141</sup>

Marko Đurić, Minister of Foreign Affairs, in an article he published in *Politico Europe*, questioning the qualification of the crime in Srebrenica as genocide, also asserted that Serbia has continuously and persistently condemned all crimes and the denial of crimes committed during the war in BiH, particularly the crime in Srebrenica.<sup>142</sup> However, this claim is contradicted by findings in both this and previous YIHR's reports on the State of Denial. Further evidence is provided by a letter from Dunja Mijatović, Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, sent in early 2024 to then Prime Minister Ana Brnabić, which outlines steps for improving the process of dealing with the past. Additionally, her report titled *Dealing with the Past for a Better Future: Achieving Justice, Peace and Social Cohesion in the Region of the Former Yugoslavia*, published in November 2023, describes practices contrary to

137 "Odalović: Protagonisti rezolucije kontrolisali Kosovo u vreme najvećeg stradanja Srba", *Novi magazin*, 23 May 2024, <https://novimagazin.rs/vesti/324296-odalovic-protagonisti-rezolucije-kontrolisali-kosovo-u-vreme-najveceg-stradanja-srba>

138 "Dačić: Rezolucija o genocidu u Srebrenici ne doprinosi pomirenju", *RTV*, 17 April 2024, [https://rtv.rs/sr\\_lat/politika/dacic-rezolucija-o-genocidu-u-srebrenici-ne-doprinosi-pomirenju\\_1532973.html](https://rtv.rs/sr_lat/politika/dacic-rezolucija-o-genocidu-u-srebrenici-ne-doprinosi-pomirenju_1532973.html)

139 "Došli na vlast zahvaljujući Srbima, a glasaju da se Srbi proglaše genocidnim: Dačić o nameri crnogorskih vlasti da glasaju za rezoluciju u UN", *Danas*, 10 May 2024, <https://www.danas.rs/vesti/politika/dacic-crna-gora-genocid/>

140 Maja Popović, "U Srebrenici nije bilo genocida", *Politika*, 23 April 2024, <https://www.politika.rs/sr/articles/amp/610833>

141 "Božić: Lažima pokušavaju Srbima da utisnu žig genocidnog naroda", *Serbian Progressive Party*, 17 April 2024, <https://www.sns.org.rs/novosti/saopstenja/bozic-lazima-pokusavaju-srbima-da-utisnu-zig-genocidnog-naroda>

142 Marko Đurić, "UN Srebrenica Resolution Will Cause Further Division in the Balkans", *Politico*, 22 May 2024, <https://www.politico.eu/article/un-generally-assembly-opinion-srebrenica-resolution-bosnia-balkans-serbia/>

those presented by Đurić. In an interview with Tanjug, commenting on the draft resolution, Đurić stated: “Is it fair that more than a hundred, some say one hundred and twenty thousand victims of war in BiH are not equally commemorated? Is it fair, just and proper towards Bosniak, Serb and Croatian victims not be equally treated by such Resolution?”<sup>143</sup>

Bratislav Gašić, Minister of Defence, in an interview for the June issue of Odbrana magazine, published by the Ministry of Defence, commented on the adopted Resolution on Srebrenica, describing it as “unfortunate”. Regarding the outcome of the vote, he stated: “A small, independent, and freedom-loving country, led by its president, succeeded, through the strength of truth and sound argument, in discrediting the document’s legitimacy”.<sup>144</sup>

On the day of the vote at the UN General Assembly, Predrag Rajić, adviser to the Prime Minister, stated on an RTS programme that it was problematic that “one crime, committed at one time and in one place, is labelled as genocide, with an evidently clear intent” – the intent being to dismantle Republika Srpska, which he claimed was the aim of the Resolution on Srebrenica.<sup>145</sup>

In September, Tomislav Momirović, Minister of Internal and Foreign Trade, reminded citizens that “we fought all over the world to defend the honour and history of our people”, emphasising that the purpose of that fight was to prove that Serbia is not a genocidal state and that the Serbs are not a genocidal people.<sup>146</sup>

As part of diplomatic efforts to oppose the draft Resolution, the Serbian Ambassador to the UN, Nemajnja Stevanović, sent a letter to the permanent missions of member states to the UN, the UN Secretary- General, and the President of the UN General Assembly, warning of the possible “dangerous consequences” of the draft, suggesting that it could jeopardise peace and stability in BiH and the Western Balkans. On that occasion, he also forwarded the letter by Željka Cvijanović, a member of the BiH Presidency, which stated that the BiH Ambassador to the UN, Zlatko Lagumdžija had unilaterally taken steps to submit the Resolution on Srebrenica, thereby violating the constitutional framework of BiH, and that the adoption of the Resolution would lead to internal unrest in the country.<sup>147</sup>

In the days leading up to the adoption of the Resolution on Srebrenica, Porfirije, Patriarch of the Serbian Orthodox Church, the largest religious community in Serbia, used his Easter message to protest against the draft Resolution: “For this reason, we are

143 “Intervju: Marko Đurić za Tanjug – Pod lupom”, Tanjug, YouTube channel, 15 May 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZlO1rAnhIMI>

144 “Intervju ministra odbrane Bratislava Gašića za junski broj magazina „Odbrana””, Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Serbia, 4 June 2024, <https://www.mod.gov.rs/cir/21316/intervju-ministra-odbrane-bratislava-gasica-za-junski-broj-magazina-odbrana21316>

145 “Četvrtkom u 9: Rezolucija o Srebrenici”, RTS, YouTube channel, 23 May 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Bgc-YuGViU>

146 “Momirović: Opozicija sprovodi naloge spoljnih službi”, Serbian Progressive Party, YouTube channel, 3 September 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f90s80NFwto>

147 “Cvijanović i ambasador Srbije pismom UN-u osporavaju rezoluciju o genocidu u Srebrenici”, Al Jazeera Balkans, 6 April 2024, <https://balkans.aljazeera.net/news/balkan/2024/4/6/cvijanovic-i-ambasador-srbije-pismom-un-u-osporavaju-rezoluciju-o-genocidu-u-srebrenici>

strongly raising our voice today and drawing attention to the absolute lie and attempt at unprecedented historical revisionism, which, through a simple inversion, seeks to label the Serbian people - the victims of multiple genocides and ethnic cleansing - as the perpetrator of genocide".<sup>148</sup>

As a form of response to the adoption of the Resolution on Srebrenica at the UN General Assembly, the All-Serb Assembly was held in Belgrade on 8 June under the slogan One People, One Assembly – Serbia and Srpska, attended by the highest-ranking officials of Serbia and Republika Srpska. A Declaration on the Protection of the National and Political Rights and the Joint Future of the Serbian People was adopted on that occasion, which, among other things, states that the Assembly does not support the Resolution on Srebrenica and emphasises that "the said Resolution is an attempt to place collective blame on the Serbian people as a whole, which attempt is unacceptable and cannot be imposed".<sup>149</sup> Ten days later, the Government of Serbia adopted the Declaration and forwarded it to the National Assembly,<sup>150</sup> which adopted it with the votes of the ruling majority.<sup>151</sup>

It was not only government representatives who took part in the campaign against the Resolution on Srebrenica, but some opposition parties also joined in denying the genocide, using identical rhetoric. The NADA coalition, composed of the New Democratic Party of Serbia and the Movement for the Restoration of the Kingdom of Serbia, announced on 9 July that it would submit to the National Assembly a proposal for a declaration on Srebrenica, stating that genocide did not occur there. In this context, Miloš Jovanović, president of the New Democratic Party of Serbia, claimed that we are "witnessing a permanent attempt to forge historical facts, historical truth, and attempts to impose guilt on the Serbian people for something that was not committed".<sup>152</sup> He described the Srebrenica genocide as a lie and stated that the adopted resolution could lead to the dismantling of Republika Srpska and that it brands the Serbs as a genocidal people, while the only genocide in the Balkans was the one against the Serbs.<sup>153</sup> At the extraordinary session of the National Assembly, where the declaration adopted at the All-Serb Assembly was discussed among

148 "Patrijarh Porfirije u Uskršnjoj poslanici: Rezolucijom pokušavaju da proglase srpski narod počiniocem genocida", nova.rs, 3 May 2024, <https://nova.rs/vesti/drustvo/patrijarh-porfirije-u-uskršnjoj-poslanici-rezolucijom-pokusavaju-da-proglase-srpski-narod-pociniocem-genocida/>

149 The text of the Declaration in Serbian available at: <https://www.predsednik.rs/pres-centar/saopštenja/deklaracija-o-zastiti-nacionalnih-i-politickih-prava-i-zajednickoj-buducnosti-srpskog-naroda>

150 "Vlada Srbije usvojila Deklaraciju sa Svesrpskog sabora", Radio Free Europe, 18 July 2024, <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/vlada-srbije-deklaracija-svesrpski-sabor/33041649.html>

151 "Skupština Srbije usvojila deklaraciju sa Svesrpskog sabora", Radio Free Europe, 31 July 2024, <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/skupstina-srbije-usvojila-deklaracija-sa-svesrpskog-sabora/33058224.html>

152 "Jovanović: Koalicija „NADA“ podneće skupštini Deklaraciju o Srebrenici", RTV, 9 July 2024, [https://www.rtv.rs/sr\\_lat/politika/stranacka-hronika/jovanovic-koalicija-nada-podnece-skupstini-deklaraciju-o-srebrenici\\_1553349.html](https://www.rtv.rs/sr_lat/politika/stranacka-hronika/jovanovic-koalicija-nada-podnece-skupstini-deklaraciju-o-srebrenici_1553349.html)

153 Ibid.

other topics, Jovanović insisted that the declaration must explicitly state that genocide did not occur in Srebrenica.<sup>154</sup>

In October, a promotion event for the book by MP Aleksandar Pavić, which denies the Srebrenica genocide and is titled Forbidden Truth about Srebrenica, was held in Zrenjanin. Among the speakers were opposition MPs Branimir Nestorović and Branko Lukić.<sup>155</sup> Nestorović stated that this book is of great significance, claiming that when one speaks the truth about Srebrenica, “then they say you are genocidal – a people who suffered the most genocides in history is genocidal.”<sup>156</sup> Another such promotion was held in Jagodina in December.<sup>157</sup>

\* For most of the war in BiH, Srebrenica, located in eastern Bosnia, was an enclave where tens of thousands of the Bosnian Muslims/Bosniaks sought refuge after fleeing attacks by Bosnian Serb forces in the surrounding areas. In March 1995, Radovan Karadžić, President of Republika Srpska and commander-in-chief of the Republika Srpska Army, ordered Bosnian Serb forces to eliminate the Muslim population from the enclaves of Srebrenica and Žepa. In July 1995, more than 8,000 Muslim men and boys were executed, while 30,000 women, children, and elderly people were forcibly removed. The ICTY and the IRMCT prosecuted 20 individuals for crimes in Srebrenica, with Radovan Karadžić, Ljubiša Beara, Željko Tolimir, Vujadin Popović, Radislav Krstić and Ratko Mladić convicted of genocide. The International Court of Justice confirmed in one of its judgments that the events in Srebrenica constituted genocide.<sup>158</sup>

## Other War Crimes

Although the Srebrenica genocide was at the centre of public and governmental attention in 2024, the Serbian authorities did not refrain from denying other war crimes or, as is more often the case, denying the existence of war crimes altogether.

On 15 January, the anniversary of the massacre in the village of Račak in Kosovo, Petar Petković, Director of the Office for Kosovo and Metohija, met with former investigating judge Danica Marinković, who had conducted the crime scene investigation into the Račak event. Petković thanked her for her work, stating that “her professional and methodical investigation contributed to establishing irrefutable facts about the events in Račak”, and that “the facts preserved for history by Danica Marinković dismantle

154 “U Skupštini Srbije nastavak rasprave o Deklaraciji sa Svesrpskog sabora”, Radio Free Europe, 24 July 2024, <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/skupstina-srbije-svesrpski-sabor-deklaracija/33048828.html>

155 “Promocija knjige Aleksandra Pavića u Zrenjaninu”, Mi – Snaga Naroda, YouTube channel, 13 October 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ajygcav9wE>

156 Ibid.

157 “Promocija knjige Aleksandra Pavića ‘Zabranjena istina o Srebrenici’ u Jagodini”, Mi – Glas iz naroda, 23 December 2024, <https://misnaganaroda.rs/event/%d0%bf%d1%80%d0%be%d0%bc%d0%be%d1%86%d0%b8%d1%98%d0%b0-%d0%ba%d1%9a%d0%b8%d0%b3%d0%b5-%d0%b0%d0%bb%d0%b5%d0%ba%d1%81%d0%b0%d0%bd%d0%b4%d1%80%d0%b0-%d0%bf%d0%b0%d0%b2%d0%b8%d1%9b%d0%b0/>

158 Srebrenica. A timeline of a Genocide, IRMCT, available at: <https://www.irmct.org/specials/srebrenica/timeline/bhs/>

any attempt to fabricate the events in Račak”.<sup>159</sup>

A panel discussion titled Responsibility towards the Truth: Aggression ‘Merciful Angel’ – 25 Years after the NATO Aggression was held in April. During the event, it was claimed that there had been no massacre on civilians in Račak, but rather that the incident had been a legitimate anti-terrorist operation carried out by the Serbian police. Among the speakers was convicted war criminal Vladimir Lazarević, while members of the Government – Ana Brnabić, Tomislav Momirović, Irena Vujović, Maja Gojković, Nikola Selaković, and Maja Popović – sat in the audience.<sup>160</sup> Moreover, the very title of the panel discussion reflects a tendentious distortion of the facts surrounding the NATO bombing of Serbia. A key element of the prevailing narrative is the claim that the operation was titled Merciful Angel, although the actual NATO code name was Allied Force, and the operation was referred to by the United States as Noble Anvil.

In June, the documentary Heroic 549th Motorised Brigade, produced by the Ministry of Defence’s Military Film Centre Zastava Film, premiered in the atrium of the Rectorate building at the University of Belgrade.<sup>161</sup>

At a session of the National Assembly in September, responding to an opposition MP, Aleksandar Vulin stated: “Saying that the government in Belgrade was responsible, the reason, cause, motive, whatever you want, for bombing Serbia is incomprehensible. It is indeed national treason”. He went on to deny crimes committed by Serbian military and police forces in Kosovo in 1998 and 1999.<sup>162</sup>

While attending the celebration of the anniversary of the First Serbian Uprising and the ceremony marking the Day of the Fighters of Republika Srpska in Višegrad, Dejan Antić, State Secretary at the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs, addressed the audience: “Just as Krađorđe’s rebels launched an armed uprising, broke the Ottoman chains of slavery, and laid the foundations for the creation of a modern Serbian state, the Serbian fighters in the Homeland Defence War defended the Serb Republic, which was created in peacetime, on 9 January 1992, in response to the policy of deconstitutionalisation of the Serbs in BiH”.<sup>163</sup>

<sup>159</sup> “Petković zahvalio sudiji Marinković što istrajava u borbi za istinu i pravdu o događajima u Račku”, Government of Serbia’s Office for Kosovo and Metohija, 15 January 2024, <https://www.kim.gov.rs/lat/v5429.php>

<sup>160</sup> Tatjana Njegomir, “Odgovornost prema istini: Milosrdni anđeo – 25 godina od NATO agresije”, *Novosti*, 24 April 2024, <https://www.novosti.rs/vesti/politika/1360132/odgovornost-prema-istini-milosrdni-andjeo-25-godina-nato-agresije>

<sup>161</sup> “Premijera dokumentarnog filma ‘Herojska 549. motorizovana brigada’”, Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Serbia, 10 June 2024, <https://www.mod.gov.rs/cir/21334/premijera-dokumentarnog-filma-herojska-549-motorizovana-brigada21334>

<sup>162</sup> “Vulin: Nacionalna izdaja je reći da je vlast u Beogradu bila odgovorna za bombardovanje Srbije”, *Politika*, 24 September 2024, <https://www.politika.rs/rf/clanak/634211/Vulin-Nacionalna-izdaja-je-reci-da-je-vlast-u-Beogradu-bila-odgovorna-za-bombardovanje-Srbije>

<sup>163</sup> “Državni sekretar Antić na obeležavanju Dana boraca Republike Srpske i 220. godišnjice od podizanja Prvog srpskog ustanka”, Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, 14 February 2024, <https://www.minrzs.gov.rs/sr/aktuelnosti/vesti/drzavni-sekretar-antic-na-obelezavanju-dana-boraca-republike-srpske-i-220-godisnjice-od-podizanja-prvog-srpskog-ustanka>

In August, Aleksandar Vučić met with Nemanja Berić, who had been sentenced to 15 days' imprisonment in Croatia for singing songs from Krajina. Following the meeting, Vučić stated that Berić had been arrested solely because he was a Serb, and added that he had promised to attend a concert of Baja Mali Knindža with Berić and his wife.<sup>164</sup> Baja Mali Knindža is known for his nationalist songs, which often contain hate speech and the glorification of war crimes.

## The 2024 Local Election Campaign

Local elections in Serbia were announced on 26 April 2024 and held six weeks later, on 2 June. The decision to call new elections followed the failure to form a local government in Belgrade after the election held on 17 December 2023. Further, in its report, OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, (ODIHR) noted that the conditions during the December elections were not equal for all participants. The report cited the prevailing involvement of President Aleksandar Vučić, pressure exerted on public sector employees to vote for the ruling party, abuse of public resources by the governing party, and Vučić's dominance in the media. In response to ODIHR's findings, Vučić stated that it was "very important" to implement the recommendations.

Although these were local elections, the dominant topic of the election campaign was the text of the draft UN Resolution on the Genocide in Srebrenica, adopted on 23 May. The resolution designated 11 July as the International Day of Reflection and Commemoration of the 1995 Genocide in Srebrenica, and condemned both the denial of the genocide and the glorification of its perpetrators. The resolution was initiated and drafted by Germany and Rwanda, and subsequently sponsored by more than 30 countries, including all the countries of the former Yugoslavia, with the exception of Serbia and Montenegro.

From the moment information about the draft Resolution on Srebrenica emerged, it became the central topic in Serbia and the focal point of the 2 June local election campaign. The Serbian Progressive Party, the Serbian Radical Party, the NADA Coalition, Zavetnici, the Movement of Socialists, and the Socialist Party of Serbia promptly responded to the announcement of the adoption of the Resolution with a renewed wave of genocide denial, denial of other war crimes, and glorification of war criminals. In addition to genocide denial, this period was also marked by manipulation and the spread of disinformation. Almost all government representatives claimed that the Resolution aimed to label Serbs as genocidal people. As Aleksandar Vučić stated: "The idea is to vote on that resolution on 27 April, to designate us as genocidal people, and to declare 11 July, the day when what happened in Srebrenica happened, the International Day of Genocide".<sup>165</sup> At a press conference on 29 March, Aleksandar Vučić added: "The very

<sup>164</sup> "Predsednik države najavio da će ići na koncert Baje Malog Knindže, primio advokata Berića", N1, 25. avgust 2024, <https://n1info.rs/vesti/predsednik-drzave-njavio-da-ce-ici-na-koncert-baje-malog-knindze-primio-advokata-berica/>

<sup>165</sup> "Snage za brzo reagovanje imaju za zadatak hapšenje Milorada Dodika", Politika, 27 March 2024, <https://www.politika.rs/sr/clanak/606134/Snage-za-brzo-reagovanje-imaju-za-zadatak-hapsenje-Milorada-Dodika>

next day [after the adoption of the Resolution], they will announce the abolition of Republika Srpska, claiming that political entities founded on genocide cannot exist. They will also demand reparations from Serbia”.<sup>166</sup>

The resolution was also used to portray the Serbs - and President Vučić - as victims, while invoking crimes committed against Serbs during the Second World War. In a press release issued on 13 April, Prime Minister Ana Brnabić stated that Aleksandar Vučić “is himself a victim of the genocide against Serbs, who never met his grandfather nor most of his family, because they were Serbs and, as such, deserved to be killed, without their graves ever being found”.<sup>167</sup> Four days later, on 17 April, Sandra Božić, a member of the Serbian Progressive Party Presidency, also addressed the public with a press release in defence of Vučić. In the statement titled “Attempting to Label Serbs as a Genocidal People through Lies”, Božić claimed, among other things, that “Srebrenica is certainly not” a genocide, and that Vučić “is now threatened with arrest, probably because he is the only Serbian president who is not ashamed and who does not apologise for being a Serb”.<sup>168</sup> On the same day, another member of the Serbian Progressive Party Presidency, Miloš Terzić, issued a press release, similarly presenting both Vučić and Serbia as victims. He stated: “All those insisting that genocide was committed in Srebrenica are serving Albin Kurti and those seeking to bring new indictments against Serbia, as additional pressure against the sovereign and freedom-loving policy pursued by President Aleksandar Vučić”.<sup>169</sup> Also on 17 April, Ivica Dačić, President of the Socialist Party of Serbia, declared that the Resolution on the Srebrenica genocide does not contribute to reconciliation or consensus, and asserted that what had happened in Srebrenica could not be qualified as genocide.

A public rally against the adoption of the UN Resolution on Srebrenica, titled Srpska is Calling You, was held at Krajina Square in Banja Luka on 18 April, with the participation of representatives from political parties in Serbia. The audience was addressed by Milica Đurđević Stamenkovski, president of the Serbian Party Zavetnici. Among others in attendance were Ana Brnabić, Nikola Selaković, Aleksandar Vulin, and Darija Kisić Tepavčević. “They want to dehumanise the Serbs, they want to undermine Republika Srpska, they want to strip it of meaning. They want to impose on Serbia a new burden of old divisions, to bring Serbia to its knees and force it to submit under the weight of that burden”, stated Đurđević Stamenkovski, adding that Republika Srpska is “the result of defending against genocide, an act of defence and a product of peace”.

Also actively engaged in genocide denial was Vladimir Đukanović, MP and member of the Serbian Progressive Party Presidency,

<sup>166</sup> “Vučić: U UN-u slijedi rezolucija o Srebrenici, pa zahtjev za ukidanje RS-a”, Al Jazeera Balkans, 29 March 2024, <https://balkans.aljazeera.net/news/balkan/2024/3/29/vucic-u-un-u-se-sprema-rezolucija-o-srebrenici-slijede-i-zahtjevi-za-ukidanje-rs-a>

<sup>167</sup> “Brnabić: Vučić je i sam žrtva genocida nad srpskim narodom”, Serbian Progressive Party, 13 April 2024, <https://sns.org.rs/lat/novosti/saopstenja/brnabic-vucic-je-i-sam-zrtva-genocida-nad-srpskim-narodom>

<sup>168</sup> “Lažima pokušavaju Srbima da utisnu žig genocidnog naroda”, Serbian Progressive Party, 17 April 2024, <https://www.sns.org.rs/novosti/saopstenja/bozic-lazima-pokusavaju-srbima-da-utisnu-zig-genocidnog-naroda>

<sup>169</sup> “Terzić: U Srebrenici se nije desio genocid”, Serbian Progressive Party, 17 April 2024, <https://www.sns.org.rs/novosti/saopstenja/terzic-u-srebrenici-se-nije-desio-genocid>

who was a frequent guest on pro-regime media during this period. In a statement to the Republika tabloid on 16 May, he said: “We, as a people, are having a horrible noose placed around our necks. We are being labelled a genocidal people, we, who suffered the most during the 20th century. We are now threatened with the abolition of Republika Srpska, and unfortunately, there are some in Serbia who are cheering for exactly that”.<sup>170</sup>

Among the opposition parties, the Movement of Free Citizens and the Green-Left Front were vocal in their support for the adoption of the Resolution. The President of the Movement of Free Citizens, Pavle Grbović, spoke at the debate The Significance of the UN General Assembly Resolution on the Srebrenica Genocide, organised by the Youth Initiative for Human Rights in Belgrade on 24 April. Aleksandar Radovanović, Secretary General of the Movement of Free Citizens, also expressed support for the Resolution, stating in a post on X that Serbia should have been one of its initiators. The Green-Left Front likewise condemned the denial of the Srebrenica genocide. Members of this party publicly addressed the issue, both in the National Assembly and in the media, on several occasions.

On 9 July 2024, MPs from the Sandžak Party for Democratic Action, Selma Kučević and Ahmedin Škrijelj, submitted a proposal for a Resolution on the Srebrenica Genocide<sup>171</sup> to the National Assembly of Serbia and called on the parliament to adopt it. “By adopting this resolution, the Serbian Assembly would take a meaningful step towards creating lasting and stable peace in the region, and relieve future generations of responsibility for crimes committed in their name by others”, the Sandžak Party for Democratic Action stated. They added that the draft resolution, which arrived to the parliament on 3 July, was also communicated to the embassies of the Quint countries (USA, Italy, Germany, UK, and France), and that the proposal was supported by MP Shaip Kamberi on behalf of the Party for Democratic Action.

On the same day, the NADA Coalition parliamentary group announced that it would submit to the National Assembly its own draft of the declaration on Srebrenica, which would assert that no genocide occurred in Srebrenica. Miloš Jovanović, head of the parliamentary group and president of the New Democratic Party of Serbia, stated that the Coalition was proud of the document, adding: “We are witnessing a permanent attempt to forge historical facts, to distort historical truth, and to impose guilt on the Serbian people for something that did not happen”.<sup>172</sup>

The City Election Committee in Niš rejected as irregular the candidate list submitted by the citizens’ group NIŠ LI JE, led by former

170 “Vladimir Đukanović: Stavljaju nam omču oko vrata”, Republika, 16 May 2024, <https://www.republika.rs/vesti/politika/544426/vladimir-djukanovic-o-rezoluciji-o-genocidu>

171 “Prijedlog Rezolucije o genocidu u Srebrenici”, Sandžak Party for Democratic Action, [https://sda.rs/slike/upload/rezolucija%2024%20scan%20\[1\].PDF](https://sda.rs/slike/upload/rezolucija%2024%20scan%20[1].PDF)

172 „Jovanović: Koalicija ‘Nada’ podneće skupštini Deklaraciju o Srebrenici”, RTV, 9. jul 2024, [https://www.rtv.rs/sr\\_lat/politika/stranacka-hronika/jovanovic-koalicija-nada-podnece-skupstini-deklaraciju-o-srebrenici\\_1553349.html](https://www.rtv.rs/sr_lat/politika/stranacka-hronika/jovanovic-koalicija-nada-podnece-skupstini-deklaraciju-o-srebrenici_1553349.html)

general and former director of the Military Security Agency, Momir Stojanović.<sup>173</sup> In ICTY judgments, Momir Stojanović is identified as one of the organisers of the military and police operation River, conducted in late April 1999. In July 2019, Serbia's OWCP issued an order to terminate the investigation against Stojanović and three other individuals for war crimes committed on the area around Đakovica in April 1999. Due to his opposition to the ruling coalition, Stojanović has been a frequent guest of Danas daily and television stations N1 and Nova S since 2016. By April 2025, none of these media outlets had ever questioned him regarding the allegations of his responsibility for war crimes in the operation River.<sup>174</sup>

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173 „Trka za glasove na jugu. Izborne liste u Nišu: 11 koalicija, stranaka i grupa građana bori se za 61 mesto u Skupštini grada“, Blic, 26. maj 2024, <https://www.blic.rs/vesti/politika/izborne-liste-u-nisu-ove-stranke-idu-na-izbore-2024/zh17pzk>

174 „Aktivistička mreža Inicijative pamti žrtve u dolini Reka na Kosovu“, Inicijativa mladih za ljudska prava, 27. april 2023, <https://yih.rs/bhs/aktivisticka-mreza-inicijative-pamti-zrtve-u-dolini-reka-na-kosovu/>

# Examples of institutional denial

Date	Statement	institution	War crime denied	Type of denial
15 January 2024	“The facts preserved for history by Danica Marinković dismantle any attempt to fabricate the events in Račak, which served as an incoherent justification and pretext for the unlawful aggression by parts of the international community against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.”	Petar Petković, director of the Government’s Office for Kosovo and Metohija	War crime in Račak	Literal denial
6 April 2024	“This adoption of the resolution is so unfair because the general resolution on genocide has already been adopted, there’s no need to adopt a separate one.”	Aleksandar Vučić, President of Serbia	Srebrenica genocide	Interpretative denial
13 April 2024	“Aleksandar Vučić, who is himself a victim of genocide against the Serbs, who never met his grandfather or most of his family because they were the Serbs and, for that alone, were deemed deserving of death, and whose graves are still unknown – that Aleksandar Vučić is now a genocidist.”	Ana Brnabić, President of the National Assembly of Serbia	Srebrenica genocide	Interpretative denial
17 April 2024	“But if we have something that happened on the territory of only one municipality in Bosnia and Herzegovina, come on, how can you call that genocide? How, if it didn’t happen across the whole territory? Even in the judgment, it says this was only about that one municipality.”	Ivica Dačić, Minister of Foreign Affairs	Srebrenica genocide	Interpretative denial

18 April 2024	“They want to dehumanise the Serbs, they want to undermine Republika Srpska, they want to strip it of meaning. They want to impose on Serbia a new burden of old divisions, to bring Serbia to its knees and force it to submit under the weight of that burden.”	Milica Đurđević Stamenkovski, Minister of Family Welfare and Democracy	Srebrenica genocide	Interpretative denial
23 April 2024	“The qualification of the events which occurred in Srebrenica as ‘genocide’ is intolerable, false and legally unacceptable, especially given that genocidal intent neither existed nor was it ever proven.”	Maja Popović, Minister of Justice	Srebrenica genocide	Interpretative denial
14 May 2024	“When Vučić heard about it, he informed the public that the goal of the resolution was to impose the most damning political and moral qualification on our people, that we are genocidists.”	Ana Brnabić, President of the National Assembly of Serbia	Srebrenica genocide	Interpretative denial
24 May 2024	“It would have been best to kill all those who were tortured, harassed, who were guilty of defending their country, like General Lazarević. The man served his full sentence in prison. He even served time he should never have had to serve...”	Aleksandar Vučić, President of Serbia	War crimes in Kosovo	Interpretative denial

4 June 2024	<p>“The manner in which this unfortunate resolution was adopted and the narrative used to justify it, reflects the depth of political hypocrisy on the part of the international community, as well as of the fact that their power and arrogance remain limited in reach. A small, independent, and freedom-loving country, led by its president, succeeded, through the strength of truth and sound argument, in discrediting the document’s legitimacy.”</p>	Bratislav Gašić, Minister of Defence	Srebrenica genocide	Interpretative denial
4 September 2024	<p>“I am really grateful for the chance to say this, and to thank you once again for tremendous personal contribution to our relations, and also for your huge personal effort in preserving the truth and helping us successfully fight against the attempt to adopt the resolution on the fake genocide in Srebrenica.”</p>	Aleksandar Vulin, Deputy Prime Minister of the Government of Serbia	Srebrenica genocide	Interpretative denial
25 December 2024	<p>“In May, contrary to all the rules of international law, they decided to designate a day to commemorate the Srebrenica genocide. We stood against it, and everyone told me ‘They’ll never forgive you for this’, because I led a brave fight alongside brave countries to stand up to the most powerful.”</p>	Aleksandar Vučić, President of Serbia	Srebrenica genocide	Interpretative denial

# Examples of extra-institutional denial

Date	Statement	Proponent of denial	War crime denied	Type of denial
13 January 2024	“The truth I established back than as the investigating judge still stands today – there was no massacre of civilians in Račak. It was a legitimate operation by the Serbian police against terrorists from the so-called Kosovo Liberation Army.”	Danica Marinković, Investigating Judge in the Račak case	Račak massacre	Literal denial
15 January 2024	“There were no civilians in Račak. A terrorist group was eliminated in a police operation, as it posed a serious threat to both civilians and the police.”	Goran Radosavljević, suspect in the murder of the Bytyqi brother	Račak massacre	Literal denial
26 January 2024	“On the eve of the 25th anniversary of the bombing of the FRY, I wish to remind you of another NATO provocation, a staged incident in Račak, Kosovo, which was used as a pretext for a large-scale military operation against Yugoslavia, in violation of all principles of international law.”	Marija Zaharova, spokesperson of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Račak massacre	Implicatory denial

3 May 2024	In his Easter message, the Patriarch of the Serbian Orthodox Church Porfirije stated that the proponents of the UN Resolution on the Srebrenica genocide "are trying to declare Serbs the perpetrators of genocide", discrediting the Resolution as amoral.	Patriarch of the Serbian Orthodox Church Porfirije	Srebrenica genocide	Interpretative denial
24 May 2024	"On the day when the masters of the world, united with their obedient satellites, seek to brand us with the horrific label of a genocidal people – I am overwhelmed with pride."	Radoš Bajić, actor and director	Srebrenica genocide	Implicatory denial
24 May 2024	"Around 3000 people were killed there [in Srebrenica]. The Hague Tribunal never established the number of victims. The number is nowhere to be found in the judgements."	Tomo Kovač, accused of the Srebrenica genocide	Srebrenica genocide	Literal denial
9 July 2024	"The NADA Coalition parliamentary group will submit to the parliament a draft declaration on Srebrenica, which, among other things, states that no genocide occurred in Srebrenica."	Miloš Jovanović, head of the parliamentary group of the New Democratic Party of Serbia	Srebrenica genocide	Implicatory denial
8 September 2024	"I was third in the chain of command, right in the middle. I got 20 years, I am proud that we managed to defend Kosovo and save both lives and equipment."	Nebojša Pavković, convicted of crimes against humanity in Kosovo	War crimes in Kosovo	Literal denial
29 December 2024	"I see you have a very clever son, and have you matured to acknowledge that no genocide took place in Srebrenica? It was a grave crime, but not genocide."	Vojislav Šešelj, convicted war criminal and president of the Serbian radical Party	Srebrenica genocide	Implicatory denial



