

STATE OF DENIAL

SERBIA 2025
WAR CRIMINALS AS DISTINGUISHED CITIZENS



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Abbreviations

BiH – Bosnia and Herzegovina

BIRN – Balkan Investigative Reporting Network

CPE – Commissioner for the Protection of Equality

FRY – Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

HLC – Humanitarian Law Center

ICJ – International Court of Justice

ICTY – International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia

IRMCT – International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals

JNA – Yugoslav People's Army

JSO – Special Operations Unit

JTRZ – War Crimes Prosecutor's Office

KLA – Kosovo Liberation Army

KRIK – Crime and Corruption Reporting Network

Mol – Ministry of the Interior

MP – Member of Parliament

NATO – North-Atlantic Treaty Organization

NUNS – Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia

ODIHR – OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

OSCE – Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

PSG – Movement of Free Citizens

RDB – State Security Directorate of the Ministry of the Interior of Serbia

RTRS – Radio Television of Republika Srpska

RTS – Radio Television of Serbia

RTV – Radio Television of Vojvodina

SAI – State Audit Institution

SDA – Party of Democratic Action

SPC – Serbian Orthodox Church

SPS – Socialist Party of Serbia

SNS – Serbian Progressive Party

UN – United Nations

VRS – Republika Srpska Army

YA – Yugoslav Army

Introduction

The report on war crimes denial in 2025 is the fourth report published by the Youth Initiative for Human Rights (YIHR) mapping and documenting the widespread denial of war crimes committed during the 1990s by officials and institutions of the Republic of Serbia, as well as by a broad range of social and political actors.

Many of the instances of war crimes denial recorded in this report took place within the specific socio-political context that shaped the whole of 2025 in Serbia – student blockades and mass protests across the country – and should be understood in that light. Demands for accountability have been at the heart of the recent student-led protests in Serbia. Students participating in the blockades have focused on the need to establish legal and political responsibility for the corruption and systemic failures that led to the collapse of the canopy at Novi Sad Railway Station on 1 November 2024, which claimed the lives of 16 people.

In its previous reports and publications,¹ YIHR has highlighted how the denial of crimes committed during the armed conflicts in the former Yugoslavia is frequently used to discredit and delegitimise political opponents, civil society organisations and independent media. The event that most clearly marked 2025 in terms of the glorification of a convicted war criminal and the denial of war crimes was the death of Nebojša Pavković. From late September to late October 2025, the state apparatus and pro-government media used Pavković's deteriorating health to deny the crimes for which he had been convicted and portray him as a distinguished military officer. The extent to which Pavković was celebrated throughout 2025 is illustrated by the fact that he became the first war criminal from the wars of the 1990s to be buried in the Alley of Distinguished Citizens at Belgrade's New Cemetery, setting a dangerous precedent that may pave the way for similar practices in the future. Pavković was granted the status of a distinguished citizen even when he died – he was buried with the highest military honours, for which reason the report bears the title *State of Denial – Serbia 2025: War Criminals as Distinguished Citizens*.

Methodological Framework

The fourth annual report of the Youth Initiative for Human Rights on the denial of war crimes and other human rights violations related to the armed conflicts in the former Yugoslavia is methodologically based on an analysis of statements made by political

1 Negiranje budućnosti – put u prošlost: Predlog novog okvira za borbu protiv negiranja genocida, Youth Initiative for Human Rights, 2023, <https://yih.rs/bhs/publikacija-negiranje-buducnosti-put-u-proslost-predlog-novog-okvira-za-borbu-protiv-negiranja-genocida/>; Maja Davidović, Branimir Đurović, Killing the truth – Genocide denial and historical revisionism in Serbia as state-sponsored violence: trajectories, challenges and opportunities, Youth Initiative for Human Rights, Cardiff University, 2025, https://yih.rs/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/KILLING-THE-TRUTH.FINAL_.pdf

officials and other individuals, official communications issued by institutions, media reporting, and decisions adopted by relevant institutions.

Depending on the source of denial and the actors involved, this report distinguishes between institutional and non-institutional denial. In Serbia, institutional denial is rooted in the state's politics of memory, characterised by historical revisionism, the denial and relativisation of crimes committed and responsibility for them.

Non-institutional denial is primarily present in the media. Its proponents include media outlets themselves, various right-wing and/or extremist groups and individuals, often prominent members of society, university professors, retired military personnel, as well as pseudo-scholars and self-proclaimed experts. Perpetrators of non-institutional denial also include individuals convicted of war crimes, as well as those suspected of such crimes. However, non-institutional denial does not occur in a social vacuum. It is supported by the institutions of the Republic of Serbia, primarily through the political construction of a reality in which the relativisation and denial of established facts and past events are treated as legitimate. Such practices are tolerated and endorsed, and are often financially supported as well.

This report identifies three strategies of denial² commonly employed in public discourse: literal denial, interpretive denial, and implicatory denial. These strategies frequently overlap and are often used simultaneously. When literal denial is confronted with irrefutable evidence, it does not disappear; rather, it is transformed into legalistic reinterpretation or political justification.

- **Literal denial** consists of claims that an event did not occur or that certain facts are untrue. Given the extensive body of judicially established facts concerning war crimes, literal denial is difficult to sustain and is therefore the least frequently used strategy.
- **Interpretive denial** involves acknowledging that an event occurred while rejecting its legal qualification, arguing that the characterisation of the event is too severe, exaggerated, or otherwise inconsistent with how it is perceived by those advancing the denial. This is the dominant strategy of denial in Serbia, particularly in relation to the denial of the genocide in Srebrenica.
- **Implicatory denial** is a form of simplified rationalisation. It does not deny that an event occurred; rather, it denies the implications of that event. This strategy is used to avoid certain moral, political, or psychological consequences: while the crime itself may be acknowledged, responsibility arising from it is rejected. Implicatory denial also encompasses the relativisation of events. Within this strategy, responsibility is often shifted onto the victims, while historical contextualisation is used to justify or excuse the event in question.

2 Stenli Koen, Stanje poricanja, Samizdat B92, Belgrade, 2003.

Actions and Statements by Executive Authorities

As in previous years, representatives of the executive authorities – from the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister and government ministers to various state institutions – were at the forefront of practices aimed at denying and relativising war crimes. Amid the socio-political crisis, mass protests, and university blockades, issues related to war crimes were frequently invoked by representatives of the executive authorities in 2025 to discredit and attack the student movement.

During the first three months of 2025, chauvinistic rhetoric directed at Croatian citizens, as well as Serbian citizens holding dual citizenship, intensified. YIHR examined this issue in greater detail in its report *Croatia Dossier: Coordinated Hatred. Human Rights Violations against Croatian Citizens and the Promotion of Hatred during the Political Crisis in Serbia (December 2024 – February 2025)*. YIHR identified five particularly indicative cases of the violation of rights and analysed more than 20 discriminatory statements made by the highest officials of the Republic of Serbia and pro-government media outlets.³ **This trend continued throughout 2025, as evidenced by the labelling of Croatian citizens and Serbian citizens belonging to the Croatian national minority as “Ustasha”. Such rhetoric is reminiscent of the late 1980s and the wars of the 1990s, when similar narratives contributed to the normalisation of the denial of war crimes committed in Croatia by forces under the control of Slobodan Milošević.**

In February, Minister of Culture Nikola Selaković stated that the aim of the blockades and protests was to force Serbia to recognise that genocide had been committed in Srebrenica and that the Serbs were a genocidal people. Similarly, NIS Board member Dragutin Matanović interpreted the protests as reflecting an anti-Serb agenda, claiming that the opposition and the students sought to force Serbs to admit that they were genocidal. Resigning Prime Minister Miloš Vučević responded dismissively to allegations that the authorities had used a sonic weapon during the opposition protest on 15 March, stating that such claims were a lie, just like the crimes at Markale and Račak. In June, ahead of attending a rally in support of the ruling authorities, Vučević again criticised the student movement, claiming that its objective was to have the Serbs declared a genocidal people.

Practices of denial in Serbia intensified in 2025 following the return of Nebojša Pavković to the country after the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (IRMCT) decided to grant him early release from the prison in Finland where he had been serving an 18-year sentence, citing his deteriorating health condition. The Serbian public learned of the IRMCT’s decision

³ YIHR: *Dossier Croatia: Coordinated Hate - Human Rights Violations Against Croatian Citizens and the Promotion of Hatred During the Political Crisis in Serbia (December 2024 - February 2025)*, March 2025: <https://yihr.rs/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Dossier-Croatia-ENG-5-min.pdf>

from President Aleksandar Vučić even before it was officially announced. Vučić wished Pavković a safe journey home, while Prime Minister Đuro Macut stated that Serbia had demonstrated its commitment to its citizens by advocating for Pavković's release. Minister of Justice Nenad Vujić noted that other Serbian citizens were serving prison sentences abroad and that Serbia must show that it stands behind those individuals. Miloš Vučević, President of the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) and adviser to the President of the Republic, stated that the current generation could take pride in the fact that Serbia had succeeded in bringing Pavković back from prison. Nebojša Pavković arrived in Serbia on 28 September 2025.

Pavković died on 20 October. Messages of condolence to his family were sent by the highest state officials. "Generations of soldiers and officers will remember him for his dedication, discipline, and conviction that the uniform must be worn with honour and one's word upheld as a sacred pledge", Vučić wrote. "In times of great trial, he remained faithful to the ideals he defended and the values in which he believed", stated Macut. Similar messages were also sent by Ivica Dačić and Bratislav Gašić. A commemoration for Pavković was held at the Army Hall in Belgrade and attended by the Chief of the General Staff of the Serbian Armed Forces, Milan Mojsilović, as well as government ministers. Pavković was buried in the Alley of Distinguished Citizens at Belgrade's New Cemetery with full military honours and in the presence of the country's highest officials.

On the same day, a gathering of regime supporters was held in an improvised camp outside the National Assembly building. The event was attended by Vučić, several government ministers, and representatives of various state institutions. Among other messages conveyed at the gathering was that Serbia had bid farewell to Pavković in a manner befitting Serbian generals and heroes.

While defending the proposal to demolish the former General Staff Headquarters of the Armed Forces of Serbia and Montenegro and transfer the land to Jared Kushner, the son-in-law of US President Donald Trump, government representatives frequently invoked the issue of attitudes towards convicted war criminals. In November, speaking on TV Pink, Vučić labelled critics of the demolition of the General Staff building as those who referred to Nebojša Pavković and Vladimir Lazarević as war criminals.

Demo Beriša, Minister for Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue, attended a celebration organised by Vojislav Šešelj and his Serbian Radical Party (SRS) in the village of Hrtkovci to mark the Day of Serbian Unity, Freedom and the National Flag. Between 10 May and 1 July 1992, around 20 Croatian families were forcibly expelled from their homes in Hrtkovci, while many others succumbed to pressure and agreed to exchange their property following the chauvinistic speech delivered by Vojislav Šešelj on 6 May 1992. Between May and August 1992, approximately 450 Croatian and ethnically mixed families left Hrtkovci under pressure.

Practices of denial also include omission. Thus, at a commemoration marking the anniversary of the NATO bombing, Vučić

stated, without mentioning the context in which Serbia was bombed, that “we have nothing to be ashamed of”, thanking those who had demonstrated honour and bravery in defending the country. Commenting on the Government’s decision to include the Day of Remembrance for Serbs Killed in the Criminal Operation Flash and the Battle of Paštrik in the 2026 calendar of state commemorations, Minister for Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Policy Milica Đurđević Stamenkovski stated that it was the duty of the state to commemorate events that “write the pages of our history” and to pass on to younger generations the knowledge, pride, and self-confidence that stem from the truth. For Đorđe Milićević, Minister without Portfolio responsible for coordinating activities and measures in the field of relations with the diaspora, the Serbian people have never waged wars of conquest and there are those who seek to reverse the roles of victim and aggressor.

The Institute for Educational Advancement approved a documentary film narrated in part by Vladimir Lazarević and included it in the educational programme for primary and secondary schools. The Provincial Secretariat for Culture purchased more than 50 copies of books authored by Milorad Ulemek Legija. Dragoslav Bokan, whose paramilitary unit, the “White Eagles”, has been linked to war crimes in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, was appointed Chair of the Governing Board of the National Theatre. As in previous years, Vojislav Šešelj participated in the Belgrade Book Fair.

At the “people’s assembly”, organised by the authorities in April under the slogan “We Will Not Give Up Serbia”, the crowd was entertained by singer Mirko Pajčin, known for chauvinistic songs that dehumanise Bosniaks and Croats and glorify war criminals.

Actions and Statements by Legislative Authorities

During 2025, 46 statements made during sessions of the National Assembly were identified as denying war crimes, glorifying war criminals, or relativising judicially established facts. The dominant patterns included the denial of the genocide in Srebrenica and accusations by members of the ruling coalition that the opposition had surrendered “Serbian generals”, as well as Slobodan Milošević, to the Hague Tribunal, an act frequently portrayed as a betrayal.

On 4 March 2025, Lepomir Ivković, an SNS member of parliament (MP), stated that the “former authorities dared to arrest the legally and legitimately elected presidents of the Republic of Serbia and Republika Srpska and hand them over to the Hague Tribunal. They dared to hand over honourable and respectable generals of the Serbian Army and honourable and respectable officers of the Serbian Army to the Hague Tribunal, where they continue to languish in The Hague dungeons, awaiting their deaths.” Ivković denied the genocide in Srebrenica by describing the UN resolution commemorating and condemning the genocide as

“shameful”. At the same time, he praised President Vučić’s appearance before the UN General Assembly, presenting it as a victory that Vučić had, according to Ivković, “persuaded 109 out of 191 countries not to vote for that shameful resolution”. Marko Atlagić, also an SNS MP, glorified Slobodan Milošević on 5 March, while accusing the opposition of having “sold Milošević to the Hague Tribunal”. He described the Tribunal itself as a “mockery” and called on the opposition to “commit suicide” because of its actions.

Commenting on a statement by then Deputy Prime Minister Aleksandar Vulin about Slobodan Milošević on the anniversary of his death, 11 March, Marina Raguš, Deputy President of the National Assembly from SNS, stated in while presiding over the parliamentary session that Milošević’s death had been a “classic murder”. On 13 March, Nenad Filipović, an MP from United Serbia, referred to 11 March, the date of Slobodan Milošević’s death, as an important date in the month of March, alongside a number of international days designated by the United Nations.

In mid-April, SNS MP Dejan Bulatović demanded that Marinika Tepić “apologise for signing the declaration on the genocide in Srebrenica”. One month before the 30th anniversary of the genocide in Srebrenica, Aleksandar Nikolić, also an SNS MP, stated that “there was no genocide in Srebrenica, and the Serbian people will never be a genocidal people”. In June, Dušan Bajatović, an MP from the Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS), stated that “some people called for Belgrade to be bombed in order to remove Slobodan Milošević. Now some are calling for Serbia to fail in order to remove Aleksandar Vučić”.

On 3 July, the opposition parliamentary group gathered around the Party of Democratic Action (SDA) of Sandžak, consisting of six members of parliament, submitted to the National Assembly a Draft Resolution on the Genocide in Srebrenica. SDA Sandžak stated that the proposal was based on the judgments of the Hague Tribunal, as well as the 2024 United Nations General Assembly Resolution proclaiming 11 July as the International Day of Reflection and Commemoration of the 1995 Genocide in Srebrenica. The draft resolution was signed by members of this parliamentary group, mainly from the SDA and the Movement of Free Citizens (PSG): Pavle Grbović, Ahmedin Škrijelj, Minela Kalendar, Ana Oreg, Šaip Kamberi and Vladimir Pajić. Although the proposers requested that the resolution be considered under an urgent procedure, the National Assembly did not vote on it until October 2025, when it was ultimately rejected.⁴

⁴ Proposal to the National Assembly of Serbia Resolution on the Genocide in Srebrenica by the parliamentary group consisting of Free Citizens’ Movement (PSG) - Sandžak Democratic Action Party (SDA Sandžak) - Party for Democratic Action (PDD), July 3, 2025: https://www.parlament.gov.rs/upload/archive/files/cir/pdf/akta_procedura/14_saziv/02-1298_25.pdf

Actions by Judicial Authorities

During 2025, trials for war crimes continued before the War Crimes Department of the Higher Court in Belgrade in the cases of Srebrenica, Srebrenica II, and Štrpci. In two of the three cases, Srebrenica II and Štrpci, first-instance judgments were delivered during the year. At the same time, the trial concerning one of the largest mass executions committed as part of the genocide in Srebrenica, at the Kravica Agricultural Cooperative, entered its tenth year.

After more than three years of proceedings, on 1 July the Higher Court in Belgrade delivered a first-instance judgment acquitting Milenko Živanović of charges that, through orders issued in November 1992 and in March and July 1995, he had participated in the forced displacement of Bosniak Muslim civilians from the Srebrenica region, specifically from areas falling within the zone of responsibility of the Drina Corps.

Following the publication of the judgment in early July 2025, the Humanitarian Law Center (HLC) stated that the first-instance acquittal of Živanović, delivered by the Trial Chamber of the Higher Court in Belgrade, was legally unsustainable and constituted a dangerous judicial precedent. According to the HLC, the reasoning presented by the presiding judge, Mirjana Ilić – namely, that the commander of the Drina Corps had not issued orders for the forced transfer of the Bosniak civilian population from Srebrenica but only combat orders directed against opposing forces – amounted to a revisionist attempt to reinterpret judicially established facts and a denial of findings contained in international judgments that form part of international law.⁵

In October 2025, the Trial Chamber of the War Crimes Department delivered a second first-instance judgment in the Štrpci abduction case, relating to the crime committed in February 1993. The Higher Court in Belgrade sentenced former members of the Army of Republika Srpska (VRS), Gojko Lukić and Duško Vasiljević, to ten years' imprisonment each, and Dragan Đekić to five years' imprisonment, having found that in 1993 they participated in the abduction of 20 non-Serb civilians from a train travelling on the Belgrade–Bar route in the town of Štrpci. The victims were subsequently brutally murdered.⁶

The first first-instance judgment, by which the perpetrators had been sentenced in 2023 to a total of 35 years' imprisonment, was quashed by the Belgrade Court of Appeal and the case was remitted for retrial. The second first-instance judgment was essentially identical to the first, although the total sentence imposed was lower because one of the convicted persons, Jovan Lipovac, had died in the meantime. In the first judgment, Lipovac, like Gojko Lukić and Duško Vasiljević, had been sentenced to ten years'

5 HLC, Higher Court in Belgrade Delivers Verdict to Former Commander of the Drina Corps of the Army of Republika Srpska, 2 July 2025, <https://www.hlc-rdc.org/en/public-information/press-releases-informisanje/higher-court-in-belgrade-delivers-verdict-to-former-commander-of-the-drina-corps-of-the-army-of-republika-srpska/>

6 RSE, "Presuda na ponovljenom suđenju u slučaju 'Štrpci' nije pravična, ocenio Fond za humanitarno parvo", 15 October 2025, <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/fond-za-humanitarno-pravo-strpci-zlocin-bih/33560597.html>

imprisonment. Another defendant, Ljubiša Vasiljević, also a former member of the VRS, died during the initial trial proceedings.⁷

In the “Tuzla Gate” case, the judgment of the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina from 2014, sentencing General Novak Đukić to 20 years’ imprisonment, remained unenforced throughout 2025. Since 2018, when a medical assessment determined that Đukić was unfit to stand trial, his condition has been reassessed every 12 months, with experts reaching the same conclusion each time. Ahead of the 30th anniversary of the crime at Tuzla Gate, on 23 May 2025, BIRN BiH reported that a new assessment of Đukić’s fitness would be conducted at the end of 2026, a fact confirmed by Novak Đukić’s lawyer, Milorad Konstantinović.⁸

The prolonged delay in these proceedings, as well as the failure of the Belgrade Court of Appeal to issue a decision in the procedure concerning the recognition of the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina’s judgment in the Đukić case, has for years been the subject of criticism by the European Commission in its reports on Serbia’s progress towards EU accession. Thus, the European Commission’s 2025 Report on Serbia noted that “Serbia still needs to enforce the judgments of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the cases of Novak Đukić, Duško Kornjača and Tomislav Kovač, who reside in Serbia”.⁹

According to reporting by Detektor.ba in December 2025, Novak Stjepanović from Bosnia and Herzegovina, who was finally convicted in Serbia and sentenced to 13 years’ imprisonment for war crimes against civilians in the Bratunac area, was present on the battlefield in Ukraine. According to the judgment, as a member of the VRS, specifically the Bratunac Light Infantry Brigade, he participated in the capture of 14 Bosniak civilians, eight of whom were later killed. The judgment further states that Stjepanović was responsible for the rape of a Bosniak woman in Bratunac. Detektor revealed that, one month before the Serbian court upheld his conviction, he had been fighting in Ukraine on the side of pro-Russian forces.¹⁰

Rajko Kozlina, a former member of the Rear Battalion of the 459th Motorised Brigade of the Yugoslav Army (YA), was found guilty by the Higher Court in Belgrade in 2019 for a crime committed in the village of Trnje in Kosovo in March 1999. However, Kozlina never reported to serve his prison sentence, and a warrant was issued for his arrest. In 2020, Serbia’s Ministry of the Interior refused to disclose whether Kozlina had used an official border crossing to leave the country, while the Second Basic Court in Belgrade, responsible for the enforcement of the sentence, did not respond to questions about whether and how it had acted in the case. Like

7 Youth Initiative for Human Rights, State of Denial – Serbia 2023: Lessons on Patriotism from War Criminals, p. 10, <https://yih.rs/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/WEB-Stanje-poricanja-2023-Final-ENG.pdf>

8 BIRN BiH, “Dok šute o preuzimanju Đukićeve kazne zatvora za tuzlansku Kapiju, u Srbiji mu zakazali novo vještačenje za dvije godine”, Detektor.ba, 23 May 2025: <https://detektor.ba/2025/05/23/dok-sute-o-preuzimanju-djukiceve-kazne-zatvora-za-tuzlansku-kapiju-u-srbiji-mu-zakazali-novo-vjestacenje-za-dvije-godine/>

9 European Commission, Serbia 2025 Report, p. 33, https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/document/download/6e68ce26-b95b-48e1-921a-c60c12da8f00_en?filename=serbia-report-2025.pdf

10 Enes Hodžić, “Ratni zločinac iz Bratunca izbjegao zatvor i ratovao u Ukrajini”, Detektor.ba/ BIRN BIH, 1 December 2025, <https://detektor.ba/2025/12/01/ratni-zlocinac-iz-bratunca-izbjegao-zatvor-i-ratovao-u-ukrajini/>

Novak Stjepanović, Kozlina remained a fugitive, and no information about his whereabouts emerged during 2025.

Proceedings against Vojislav Šešelj and four SRS members (Miljan Damjanović, Mirosljub Ignjatović, Ljiljana Mihajlović and Ognjen Mihajlović) were initiated for contempt of the IRMCT. They are accused of disclosing confidential documents and witness testimony during Vojislav Šešelj's war crimes trial. The IRMCT referred the case to the Serbian judiciary in 2024, and the proceedings are now being conducted in Serbia under the supervision of the Mechanism, for violations of rules protecting the identity of witnesses. By the end of November 2025, the IRMCT officer assigned to the case, Dagmara Albrecht, had issued seven monitoring reports on the prosecution of the case. In most of these reports, Albrecht noted that the War Crimes Prosecutor's Office had not been open to cooperation and communication in relation to the proceedings. Meanwhile, throughout 2025, Šešelj and other SRS officials frequently appeared on television stations with national coverage, where they often threatened political opponents¹¹ and used hate speech instead of appearing in court.¹²

On 11 June 2025, the IRMCT President, Graciela Gatti Santana, once again reported Serbia to the UN Security Council for its refusal to arrest and surrender members of the far-right SRS, Petar Jojić and Vjerica Radeta, who are also charged with contempt of the Hague Tribunal.

"The case against Petar Jojić and Vjerica Radeta for contempt of court remains unresolved. Serbia continues to refuse to execute the outstanding arrest warrants against these accused persons, despite its legal obligations and despite this matter having been raised before this Council on numerous occasions", Santana stated while presenting the IRMCT's regular report to the Security Council. Over the years, Gatti Santana and her predecessor, Carmel Agius, repeatedly warned the Security Council that Serbia was "refusing" to comply with the court order requiring the arrest and transfer of Jojić and Radeta to The Hague. Since 2015, when the IRMCT first issued arrest warrants for the two accused, the Serbian authorities have refused to arrest and surrender them to The Hague.¹³

11 Davor Lukač, "Barikade u Zemunu: Šešelj preti da će u sredu da otera 'ustasoide'", Vreme portal, 8 July 2025, <https://vreme.com/razno/barikade-u-zemunu-seselj-preti-da-ce-u-sredu-da-otera-ustasoide/>

12 BIRN, "Srbija kritikovana za ignorisanje haškog posmatrača u Šešeljevom predmetu za nepoštivanje suda", 21 May 2025, <https://balkaninsight.com/sr/2026/05/21/srbija-kritikovana-za-ignorisanje-haskog-posmatraca-u-seseljevom-predmetu-za-nepostivanje-suda/btj-sr/>

13 "Hag ponovo prijavio Srbiju zbog odbijanja da izruči dvoje radikala", Radio Slobodna Evropa, 11 June 2025, <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/hag-izrucenje-radikali-jojic-radeta-srbija/33440263.html>

Promoters of War Crimes Denial Narratives

In 2025, the main promoters of war crimes denial narratives, across a broad range of actors, were representatives of the authorities and the media. The President of the Republic, the Prime Minister and government ministers, members of parliament, state secretaries, and various state institutions participated in different ways in the denial and relativisation of war crimes, the glorification of convicted war criminals, and the promotion of narratives portraying the Serbian people as the greatest, or even the sole, victims of the wars in the former Yugoslavia. Many of these practices were used to attack the student blockades and protests and to discredit political opponents and other dissenting voices.

These practices ranged from public statements and joint media appearances with convicted war criminals to providing public platforms for the promotion of war criminals and their “achievements”. Certain ministries were particularly active in denying war crimes, most notably the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry for Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Policy, through official statements, commemorations, and similar events.

Various media outlets, including tabloids and television channels with national coverage, continuously provided space for a range of actors who not only denied particular war crimes and glorified convicted war criminals, but also used these issues to stigmatise the student movement and opposition parties. The tabloid *Informer* played a leading role in this regard through its newspaper, online portal, and television channel.

Convicted war criminals play a particularly important role in these practices due to their direct involvement in the armed conflicts. During television appearances, where they are often presented as analysts or experts, they frequently deny the crimes for which they were convicted, as well as other crimes committed by other Serbian military formations, while also attacking critics of the ruling regime.

In addition to government representatives, state institutions, and media outlets close to the ruling authorities, the promoters of denial narratives included numerous non-state actors, such as the Serbian Literary Cooperative, the Serbian Orthodox Church, non-governmental organisations close to the authorities, representatives of the academic community, and certain opposition parties. Each of these actors, in different ways, glorified particular convicted war criminals and/or relativised crimes committed during the conflicts.

Glorification of Convicted War Criminals

Nebojša Pavković

The convicted war criminal most frequently glorified by representatives of the authorities during 2025, most often by the highest-ranking state officials, was Nebojša Pavković.

Pavković was convicted at first instance in 2009, and the judgment became final in 2014. He served his 22-year prison sentence in Finland. In September 2025, President Aleksandar Vučić informed the public that Pavković would be granted early release on health grounds at Serbia's request.¹⁴ Vučić announced this information before the IRMCT had published its decision, which YIHR condemned as political exploitation and an act undermining good neighbourly relations in the region.¹⁵

Before Pavković arrived in Serbia, Vučić called him to wish him a safe journey home, while Prime Minister Đuro Macut stated that Serbia had demonstrated that it cares for its citizens.¹⁶ Minister of Justice Nenad Vujić declared that "we must show that, as a state, we stand behind these people".¹⁷ In a special programme on Informer TV dedicated to Pavković's return from prison, Miloš Vučević, adviser to the President of the Republic and President of the SNS, stated that "it is a source of pride for today's generation that we succeeded in bringing back to Serbia two great wartime commanders (Vladimir Lazarević and Nebojša Pavković, authors' note) (...) together we demonstrated our attitude not only towards General Pavković and his family, but also towards the state". During the programme, Vučević glorified Pavković and criticised the cooperation of the Serbian authorities with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) following the change of government in 2000.¹⁸ Minister Vujić also appeared in the programme.

14 B.B., "Vučić: Nebojša Pavković će biti prevremeno pušten iz Haga", *Vreme*, 27 September 2025, <https://vreme.com/vesti/vucic-nebojsa-pavkovic-ce-biti-prevremeno-pusten-iz-haga/>

15 Youth Initiative for Human Rights, "Masovna kršenja ljudskih prava ne mogu se nazvati 'junačkom borbom'", 30 September 2025, <https://yih.rs/bhs/masovna-kršenja-ljudskih-prava-ne-mogu-se-nazivati-junackom-borbom/>

16 Premijer Macut: General Nebojša Pavković stigao u Srbiju", *Danas*, 28 September 2025, <https://www.danas.rs/vesti/politika/avion-s-generalom-nebojsom-pavkovicem-sleteo-u-beograd/>

17 "Država Srbija da pokaže da stoji iza haških osuđenika, kaže ministar pravde", *Radio Slobodna Evropa*, 29 September 2025, <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/ministar-pravde-vujic-nebojsa-pavkovic-haski-osudjenici/33544306.html>

18 Serbian Progressive Party, "Vučević: Najvažnije da je general Pavković u Srbiji", 20 October 2025, YouTube video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h0WyyFKHa78>

Nebojša Bakarec, an SNS MP, stated that “General Pavković is our hero”, that “they would not have released him if he had been guilty of anything”, and that “The Hague has shown itself to be a political court, not a court of justice”, which “convicted only Serbs, not a single Croat or Albanian”.¹⁹

The opposition parliamentary party “We – The Power of the People” published a statement on its website welcoming Pavković’s return to Serbia “after many years of unjust imprisonment”, describing him as “a symbol of the resistance, honour and steadfastness of the Serbian people in defending the homeland against NATO aggression and *Shqiptar* terrorists”, and the Hague Tribunal as “a shameful anti-Serb creation of the West”.²⁰

Pavković died on 20 October. In his message of condolence, Vučić stated that Pavković had “carried out his duty with a strong sense of responsibility, dedication and loyalty to Serbia”.²¹ Macut praised Pavković, stating that “in times of great trial, he remained faithful to the ideals he defended and the values in which he believed” and that he would be remembered “for having devoted his life to the service of the homeland”.²² Dačić emphasised that Pavković had been “a soldier who, in difficult times, defended the honour and dignity of Serbia and its army”.²³ In his message of condolence, Gašić stated that “the General’s loyalty and courage shown in the most difficult moments will serve as an example of how Serbia should be loved and defended”.²⁴ Responding to the news of Pavković’s death, Miloš Vučević stated: “Rest in peace, General. Thank you for your honour, courage and service to the homeland. Eternal glory to Nebojša Pavković”.²⁵

Appearing on a special Informer TV programme dedicated to Nebojša Pavković, Milovan Drecun, President of the National Assembly Committee on Defence and Internal Affairs, commented on his wartime comrade: “I loved and respected him immensely. We became friends during the war and forged that wartime bond. I saw what a wonderful man he was, a stable person, a man of good character ... a soldier, yet kind-hearted. How brave he was. How much he sacrificed himself to defend the homeland. And then, afterwards, how much he sacrificed himself again by allowing himself to be convicted in order to defend the honour of the army he commanded. It is our duty, those of us who knew him and served with him, not to allow his heroism to be forgotten, particularly

19 “Da je bio kriv, ne bi ga ni pustili iz Haga – Šljivančanin i Bakarec o generalu Pavkoviću: Vratio se i podigao moral Srbije, ali pravda još nije zadovoljena!”, Kurir, 3 October 2025, <https://www.kurir.rs/vesti/politika/9788915/sljivancanin-i-bakarec-o-generalu-nebojsi-pavkovicu>

20 Pokret Mi – Snaga Naroda, “Dobro došao kući, generale Pavkoviću!”, 28 September 2025, <https://pokretmisnaganaroda.rs/saopstenja/2942/>

21 “Državni vrh uputio saučesće povodom smrti generala Pavkovića: Život posvetio služanju zemlji i vojsci”, RTS, 20 October 2025, <https://www.rts.rs/vesti/politika/5810069/drzavni-vrh-uputio-saucesca-povodom-smrti-general-a-pavkovi-ca-zivot-posvetio-sluzenju-zemlji-i-vojsci.html>

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid

24 Ibid

25 Serbian Progressive Party, “Vučević: Večna slava Nebojši Pavkoviću”, 20 October 2025, <https://www.sns.org.rs/novosti/vesti/vucevic-vecna-slava-nebojsi-pavkovicu>

by younger generations, because what he did was extraordinary”.²⁶ During the same programme, alongside Vojislav Šešelj, Mile Rosić, State Secretary at the Ministry for Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Policy, stated that “we have lost a hero” and that Pavković had been “a symbol of Serbia’s defence, a symbol of heroism, a symbol of patriotism”.²⁷

Appearing on Studio B television, Vojislav Šešelj told viewers that he had called President Vučić to ask that Pavković be buried with full military honours, only for Vučić to inform him that he had already made that decision.²⁸

A commemoration for Nebojša Pavković was held at the Serbian Army Hall in Belgrade. Those in attendance included Bratislav Gašić, Nikola Selaković, Minister of Culture, Petar Petković, Acting Director of the Office for Kosovo and Metohija, and Milan Mojsilović, Chief of the General Staff of the Serbian Armed Forces.²⁹ Pavković was buried on 22 October with full military honours in the Alley of Distinguished Citizens at Belgrade’s New Cemetery. The funeral was attended by Nikola Selaković, Milica Đurđević Stamenkovski, Minister for Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Policy, Suzana Paunović, Secretary General to the President of the Republic, Bratislav Gašić, Milan Mojsilović, and members of the Minister of Defence’s collegium.³⁰

On the same day, a gathering of regime supporters was held outside the National Assembly building in the improvised camp known as “Ćaciland”. Addressing those gathered, Aleksandar Vučić referred to the funeral of Nebojša Pavković, stating that Serbia had bid him a dignified farewell “in a manner befitting Serbian generals and heroes”.³¹ In addition to Vučić, those present included Bratislav Gašić, Darija Kisić Tepavčević, Director of the Science Fund, Dejan Tomašević, President of the Olympic Committee of Serbia, and Mihailo Jovanović, Director of the Office for Information Technologies and eGovernment, as well as veterans of the Red Berets (JSO) and Goran Radosavljević Guri, the former commander of the Gendarmerie who has been linked to the killing of the Bytyqi brothers.³²

Some opposition parties also reacted to the death of Nebojša Pavković. The New Democratic Party of Serbia posted the message: “Rest in peace and thank you, General” on X.³³ On the same social media platform, the “Enough is Enough” party paid tribute to

26 “Specijal – zbogom generale Pavkoviću!”, Informer, YouTube video, 20 October 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i21VyvztpC8>

27 Ibid

28 “Dr Vojislav Šešelj u emisiji ‘Otvoreni Balkan’ na TV Studio B”, TV Studio B, YouTube video, 20 November 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gdcCNvbFX5w>

29 “Održana komemoracija generalu Nebojši Pavkoviću u Domu Vojske Srbije”, Una, 22 October 2025, <https://una.rs/vesti/politika/odrzana-komemoracija-generalu-nebojsi-pavkovicu-u-domu-vojske-srbije>

30 Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Serbia, “General Pavković sahranjen uz najviše vojne počasti”, 22 October 2025, <https://www.mod.gov.rs/cir/22763/general-pavkovic-sahrnjen-uz-najvise-vojne-pocasti>

31 “Od incidenata do okupljanja: Veče na platou ispred Skupštine uz prisustvo ministra i predsednika”, Insajder, 22 October 2025, <https://www.insajder.net/vesti/pocelo-okupljanje-gradana-ispred-skupstine-srbije>

32 Ibid.

33 Post on X, <https://x.com/novidsscentar/status/1980294409322430526>

the deceased general with the words “Honour to his memory”, adding that “it is a great disgrace for the Serbian state that he was handed over to the political court in The Hague”.³⁴

**Nebojša Pavković served as commander of the Third Army of the Yugoslav Army during the Kosovo war. The ICTY sentenced him to 22 years’ imprisonment for crimes against humanity committed against Albanians in Kosovo in 1999. Pavković was found responsible for deportations, other inhumane acts, murders, and persecution as crimes against humanity, as well as murder as a violation of the laws or customs of war.*

Vladimir Lazarević

Alongside Nebojša Pavković, one of the most prominently glorified convicted war criminals during 2025 was Vladimir Lazarević. In March, Lazarević visited the improvised camp in Belgrade’s Pioneer Park, where a group of people identifying themselves as “students who want to study” had been staying with the support of the authorities. Addressing those gathered, Lazarević drew parallels between the current socio-political crisis and the 1999 NATO bombing campaign, stating that “we did not allow them to defeat us, not in four days, nor in 78 days”.³⁵

In April, a commemorative event marking the anniversary of the beginning of the Battle of Košare was held in Kruševac. Vladimir Lazarević addressed the gathering via telephone. Those present included Ivan Manojlović, Mayor of Kruševac, Dragana Barišić, President of the Kruševac City Assembly, as well as a delegation from the Ministry of Defence and the Serbian Armed Forces.³⁶

In May, the United Peasant Party marked its patron saint’s day celebration in Svrlijig. Among the guests were Nevena Đurić, Deputy President of the National Assembly, Marko Milošević, an SPS MP, Slavica Đukić Dejanović, adviser to the Minister of the Interior, Milovan Bojić, Director of the Dedinje Institute for Cardiovascular Diseases, and Dejan Miletić, a councillor in the Svrlijig Municipal Assembly.³⁷ Vladimir Lazarević also addressed those in attendance.

In July, a ceremonial reception was held at the Serbian Army Hall in Niš in honour of Lieutenant General Milosav Simović, who had stepped down as Commander of the Serbian Armed Forces’ Land Forces at the end of 2024. The event was attended by representatives of the Ministry of the Interior and the Gendarmerie, heads of public enterprises and other state institutions, and

34 Post on X, <https://x.com/DostaJeBilo/status/1980251023827415088>

35 “Haški osuđenik Lazarević u Pionirskom parku: U toku dugo planirani napad na našu zemlju”, N1, 13 March 2025, <https://n1info.rs/vesti/haski-osudjenik-lazarevic-u-pionirskom-parku-u-toku-dugo-planirani-napad-na-nasu-zemlju/>

36 “Obeležavanje 26. godišnjice početka bitke na Košarama”, Radio Televizija Kruševac, 9 April 2025, <https://www.rtk.rs/2025/04/09/obelezavanje-26-godisnjice-pocetka-bitke-na-kosarama/>

37 “Ujedinjena seljačka stranka obeležila Markovdan”, Glas Juga, 9 May 2025, <https://glasjuga.rs/ujedinjena-seljacka-stranka-obelezila-markovdan/>

the mayors of Preševo, Bujanovac, Vranje, Leskovac, Prokuplje, Pirot, Kruševac, Zaječar, and Knjaževac. Dragoslav Pavlović, Mayor of Niš, delivered a speech at the event, which was also attended by Vladimir Lazarević.³⁸

Lazarević also appears as one of the narrators in the documentary NATO Aggression 1999: Košare. The Institute for Educational Advancement approved the film and included it in the educational programme for primary and secondary schools.³⁹

During the parliamentary debate in November on amendments to the *lex specialis* concerning the former General Staff Headquarters of the Armed Forces of Serbia and Montenegro, Milenko Jovanov, an SNS MP, criticised opposition MPs for the way they had reacted to the return to Serbia of Generals Pavković and Lazarević after serving prison sentences abroad: “When (Nebojša Pavković, authors’ note) returned from The Hague (...) look at all the things they said about that man. Look at all the things those same people said about General Lazarević when he returned from The Hague, when he was welcomed here in the manner he deserved”.⁴⁰

Appearing on TV Pink in November, Aleksandar Vučić commented on opposition and public criticism of plans to demolish the former General Staff Headquarters building. He stated that the building had been damaged during the NATO bombing campaign, which the same people opposing its demolition referred to as an “intervention”, and that these were the people “for whom Pavković is a criminal, for whom Lazarević is a criminal”.⁴¹

Vojislav Šešelj

Among the most prominent convicted war criminals in public life is Vojislav Šešelj, who frequently appears in media outlets close to the Serbian Progressive Party, often alongside government officials, where he comments on current political affairs.

In January, Šešelj appeared twice on Kurir TV, once alongside Livia Pavićević, State Secretary at the Ministry of Agriculture,⁴² and a second time with Stefan Srbljanović, State Secretary at the Ministry of Mining and Energy.⁴³ In February, he appeared on the same

38 Toma Todorović, “Milosav Simović ostaje u Vojski Srbije”, *Politika*, 3 July 2025, <https://www.politika.rs/sr/clanak/685223/milosav-simovic-ostaje-u-vojski-srbije>

39 “Pesma posvećena filmu ‘Košare’: Put do trona, a tron je škola Video”, *B92*, 2 March 2025, <https://www.b92.net/zivot/aktuelno/108298/pesma-posvecena-filmu-kosare-put-do-trona-a-tron-je-skola-video/vest>

40 “Jovanov: Govore o simbolu NATO agresije, a bacaju drvlje i kamenje na Pavkovića”, *Euronews*, 6 November 2025, <https://www.euronews.rs/srbija/politika/195519/rasprava-o-generalstabu-i-nato-agresiji/vest>

41 Serbian Progressive Party, “Vučić: Uvek ću biti za dijalog”, YouTube video, 11 November 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZAT8Umelq4Y>

42 “Kada bi nam Bugari i Rumuni zabranili transpor nafte Dunavom, to bi bila objava rata! Šešelj oštro za Kurir: Moramo da im stavimo do znanja da ne smeju!”, *Kurir*, 11 January 2025, <https://www.kurir.rs/vesti/politika/9553873/gosti-specijalne-emisije-puls-srbije-vikend-seselj-bez-dileme-o-posledicama-sankcija-nis-u>

43 “Očigledno je kome je u interesu da se podigne tenzija u društvu – Stručnjaci bez dileme: Bilo je protesta, ali ovo je prvi put da se blokiraju fakulteti”, *Kurir*, 17 January 2025, <https://www.kurir.rs/vesti/politika/9560203/vojislav-seselj-o-incidentu-na-pravnom-fakultetu>

television channel together with Nebojša Bakarec, an SNS MP.⁴⁴

In March, Šešelj appeared on Prva TV alongside Vladan Petrov, a judge of the Constitutional Court.⁴⁵ Two months later, his fellow guest on the TV Pink programme *Hit Tvit* was Nenad Popović, Minister without Portfolio,⁴⁶ while on Kurir TV he appeared together with Nebojša Kuzmanović, Director of the Archives of Vojvodina.⁴⁷ In June, he once again appeared on Kurir TV alongside State Secretary Livia Pavičević.⁴⁸

To mark the Day of Serbian Unity, Freedom and the National Flag, celebrated on 15 September, Vojislav Šešelj and his Serbian Radical Party organised a “great Serbian national celebration” the following day in the village of Hrtkovci in Vojvodina. During the event, Šešelj told Informer TV that “Serbdom is celebrated here and will continue to be celebrated, and a Greater Serbia is the Radical oath”.⁴⁹ Among the guests was Demo Beriša, Minister for Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue. Asked by a journalist from Insajder to comment on his presence at the event, Minister Beriša stated that he had attended in a private capacity on private property, that he had stayed for less than an hour, and that he saw no reason for public concern.⁵⁰

In October, as every year, Šešelj’s publishing house Velika Srbija (“Greater Serbia”) had its own stand at the Belgrade International Book Fair, where he signed books and posed for photographs with visitors.⁵¹

**Vojislav Šešelj has been the long-serving president of the Serbian Radical Party. The IRMCT sentenced him to ten years’ imprisonment for persecution, incitement to persecution, deportation, and the forcible transfer of Croats from the village of Hrtkovci in Vojvodina in 1992.*

44 “Dr Vojislav Šešelj u emisiji ‘Puls Srbije vikend’ na TV Kurir”, Kurir, YouTube video, 1 February 2025, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w9xF_zg1JTE&t=1s

45 “Šešelj na TV Prva o pokušaju obojene revolucije: Uhapsiti rektora Đokića, postoje dva glavna centra pobune u Srbiji”, *Novosti*, 26 March 2025, <https://www.novosti.rs/vesti/politika/1474753/seselj-prva-pokusaju-obojene-revolucije-uhapsiti-rektora-djokica-postoje-dva-glavna-centra-pobune-srbiji>

46 “Dr Vojislav Šešelj u emisiji ‘Hit Tvit’ na RTV Pink”, RTV Pink, YouTube video, 11 May 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XL8avvx-CLY>

47 “Tito je oblikovao sudbinu Srbije! Gosti emisije ‘Puls Srbije’ sumiraju da li se vraćamo starim vrednostima: Osećaju se posledice!”, Kurir, 25 May 2025, https://www.kurir.rs/amp/9679698/tito-je-oblikovao-sudbinu-srbije-strucnjaci-sumiraju-da-li-se-vracamo-starim-vrednostima?utm_source=kurir&utm_medium=mostread_sidebar_widget&utm_campaign=adria_internal

48 “Napadač je priznao, to je najveća vrednost – Šešelj o konačnom procesuiranju nasilnika blokadera – zadovoljan, ali upozorava: Ne sme ni to naglo da se radi!”, Kurir, 8 June 2025, <https://www.kurir.rs/vesti/politika/9692579/seselj-o-konacnom-procesuiranju-nasilnika-blokadera-zadovoljan-ali-upozorava>

49 K.S., “Hrtkovci: Veliko narodno veselje vojvode Šešelja”, *Vreme*, 16 September 2025, <https://vreme.com/vesti/hrtkovci-veliko-narodno-veselje-vojvode-seselja/>

50 “Beriša: Nisam bio u Hrtkovcima kao ministar, već kao privatno lice, ne vidim razlog za uznemirenje”, *Insajder Video*, YouTube video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p7w6bD4DrmE>

51 “Može da se slika samo ko nije blokader – Šešelj postavio uslov za fotografiju omladincima na Sajmu knjiga [video]”, *Novosti*, 30 October 2025, <https://www.novosti.rs/vesti/politika/1541230/moze-slika-samo-ko-nije-blokader-seselj-postavio-uslov-fotografiju-omladincima-sajmu-knjiga-video>

Ratko Mladić

At a football match between FC Novi Pazar and FC Partizan, Partizan supporters displayed a banner featuring Ratko Mladić and chanted his name. Reacting to the supporters' conduct, Usame Zukorlić, Minister without Portfolio responsible for reconciliation, regional cooperation and social stability, criticised Rasim Ljajić, President of the Temporary Administration of FC Partizan. Zukorlić's criticism was in turn challenged by Husein Memić, Minister of Tourism and Youth.⁵² At a football match played in Gibraltar in July between Lincoln FC and Red Star FC, Red Star supporters also chanted Ratko Mladić's name.⁵³ Both Partizan and Red Star FCs receive funding from the budget of the Republic of Serbia.

Appearing on Prva TV in May, Dragoslav Bokan, who two months later became Chair of the Governing Board of the National Theatre, described Ratko Mladić, while commenting on his health condition, as "a unifying symbol of patriotic Serbia".⁵⁴

No reaction came from the competent authorities after supporters of the Romanian national football team, travelling to Bosnia and Herzegovina for a match, unfurled a banner in front of the Church of Saint Sava in Belgrade bearing the message in English: "Mladić, a European hero, dropping Muslims to zero".⁵⁵

** Ratko Mladić is the former commander of the Main Staff of the VRS. The ICTY sentenced him to life imprisonment for the genocide in Srebrenica, crimes against humanity, and violations of the laws or customs of war committed by Serb forces in multiple municipalities during the armed conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina.*

Nikola Šainović

In March, Miroslav Španović, an MP in the Assembly of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, appeared alongside Nikola Šainović on the TV Happy programme Aktuelnosti, where they discussed the armed conflict in Ukraine.⁵⁶ In May, Šainović spoke at a panel discussion entitled The Role and Importance of Special Police Units, held at the premises of the University of Criminal Investigation

52 D.U., "Rat ministra zbog meča Novi Pazar – Partizan: Zukorlić isprovizao Rasima Ljajića, pa dobio brutalan odgovor!", Telegraf, 4 May 2025, <https://www.telegraf.rs/sport/fudbal/4102021-rat-ministara-zbog-meca-novi-pazar-partizan-zukorlic-isprovizao-rasima-ljajica-pa-dobio-brutalan-odgovor>

53 "Delije na Gibraltaru veličali ratnog zločinca Mladića [video]", N1, 23 July 2025, <https://n1info.ba/sport/nogomet/delije-na-gibraltaru-velicali-ratnog-zlocinca-mladica-video/>

54 "Ratko Mladić u lošem stanju? – Jutro", Prva, YouTube video, 26 May 2025, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L82_QHyWZao

55 "Ovo se neće svideti komšijama: Rumunski navijači u Beogradu razvili transparent podrške Ratku Mladiću", Sportal, 15 November 2025, <https://sportal.blic.rs/prica/ovo-se-neece-svideti-komsijama-rumunski-navijaci-u-beogradu-razvili-transparent-podrske-ratku-mladicu-foto-2025111515003737736>

56 "Aktuelnosti" na Happy TV: Perspektiva mira u Ukrajini", Happy TV, 20 March 2025, <https://happytv.rs/aktuelnosti/aktuelnosti-na-happy-tv-perspektiva-mira-u-ukrajini/814288/>

and Police Studies.⁵⁷ In June, he participated in the SPS campaign for the local elections in Zaječar, serving as the party's coordinator for the Zaječar District.⁵⁸ The following month, he appeared on Prva TV together with Marina Raguš, Deputy President of the National Assembly.⁵⁹ In November and December, he appeared with Milovan Drecun on Informer TV⁶⁰ and K1 Television.⁶¹

**Nikola Šainović served as Prime Minister of Serbia and Deputy Prime Minister of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) during the 1990s. The ICTY sentenced him to 18 years' imprisonment for crimes against humanity and violations of the laws or customs of war committed in Kosovo.*

Vlastimir Đorđević

In June, Vlastimir Đorđević unveiled a plaque in Vladičin Han marking the renaming of a street as Special Police Units Street.⁶² In November, Minister Ivica Dačić and Police Director Dragan Vasiljević attended the patron saint's day celebration of the Association of Veterans of the Special Police Units, joined by convicted war criminals Vlastimir Đorđević and Nikola Šainović.⁶³

** Vlastimir Đorđević served as Head of the Public Security Department and Assistant Minister of the Interior during the Kosovo war. The ICTY sentenced him to 18 years' imprisonment for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Kosovo, including his role in concealing the bodies of Kosovo Albanians.*

57 M.R., "Heroji otadžbine na jednom mestu! Tribina 'U čast i slavu komandantu PJP, generalu Obradu Stevanoviću'", Telegraf, 22 May 2025, <https://www.telegraf.rs/vesti/srbija/4112803-heroji-otadzbine-na-jednom-mestu-tribina-u-cast-i-slavu-komandantu-pjp-generalu-obradu-stevanovicu>

58 "Socijalisti prvi put od 1990. godine nemaju odbornike u Zaječaru: Novica Tončev poziva na odgovornost članove Predsedništva stranke", nova.rs, 9 June 2025, <https://nova.rs/vesti/politika/socijalisti-prvi-put-od-1990-godine-nemaju-odbornike-u-zajecaru-novica-toncev-poziva-na-odgovornost-clanove-predsednistva-stranke/>

59 "Kako danas žive Srbi na Kosovu i Metohiji?", Prva, 24 July 2025, <https://www.prva.rs/video/jutro/104384/kako-danas-zive-srbi-na-kosovu-i-metohiji>

60 "Info jutro – Kosovski božuri dočekani u Srbiji", Informer, YouTube video, 6 November 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=216VU4LdLo>

61 "Novi udar na Srpsku listu! Šta Kurti želi da postigne i kakav odgovor stiže iz Evrope? [Foto]", K1, 5 December 2025, <https://www.k1info.rs/vesti/politika/111720/milovan-drecun-nikola-sainovic-u-uranku/vest>

62 "PJP dobile svoju prvu ulicu u Srbiji: Tablu otkrio general u penziji Vlastimir Đorđević [Foto]", OK Radio, 25 June 2025, https://www.okradio.rs/m/vesti/lokalne/pjp-dobile-svoju-prvu-ulicu-u-srbiji-tablu-otkrio-general-u-penziji-vlastimir-dordevic-foto_97294.html

63 Instagram post by the Ministry of the Interior, 8 November 2025, https://www.instagram.com/p/DQzAHY6j00L/?img_index=6

Vinko Pandurević

Vinko Pandurević and Aleksandar Pavić, an MP, appeared as guests on the TV Kurir programme *Ni 5 ni 6* in March⁶⁴ and April⁶⁵. In April, Pandurević also appeared on Happy TV alongside Branko Ružić, an SPS MP.⁶⁶ Later that year, in December, he again appeared on Happy TV, on the programme *Aktuelnosti*, together with Aleksandar Mastilović of the Centre for Digital Transformation of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Serbia.⁶⁷

**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 March, Dragan Vasiljković visited the improvised camp in Belgrade's Pioneer Park established by supporters of the ruling Serbian Progressive Party.⁶⁸ In August, he appeared on TV Kurir alongside Nebojša Bakarec, commenting on and criticising the anti-government protests.⁶⁹

** Dragan Vasiljković, better known as Captain Dragan, was the founder and commander of the Serbian paramilitary unit "Knindže" during the war in Croatia. In Croatia, he was sentenced to 13 years' imprisonment for war crimes committed against Croatian civilians and prisoners of war.*

64 "Godišnjica početka NATO bombardovanja; nepoznata sudbina NATO saveza – ne propustite u današnjoj emisiji 'Ni 5 ni 6'", Kurir, 24 March 2025, <https://www.kurir.rs/vesti/9622492/godisnjica-pocetka-nato-bombardovanja-nepoznata-sudbina-nato-saveza-ne-propustite-u-danasnjoj-emi>

65 Luka Petrović Majer, "Trampovo uvođenje carina otvara nova tržišta?! Gosti kod Jovane Grgurević analiziraju kako će se ova odluka odraziti na Srbiju", Kurir, 3 April 2025, <https://www.kurir.rs/planeta/9632298/gosti-kod-jovane-grgurevic-analiziraju-kako-ce-se-ova-odluka-odraziti-na-srbiju>

66 "Aktuelnosti" na Happy TV: Niko ne sumnja da će Rusija pobediti!", Happy TV, 21 April 2025, <https://happytv.rs/aktuelnosti/aktuelnosti-na-happy-tv-niko-ne-sumnja-da-ce-rusija-pobediti/824186/>

67 "Aktuelnosti" na Happy TV: U Rusiji ništa nije dogovoreno", Happy TV, 3 December 2025, <https://happytv.rs/aktuelnosti/aktuelnosti-na-happy-tv-putin-kaze-da-nije-rec-o-mirovnom-planu/880358/>

68 Facebook post, 11 March 2025, <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=8457347904368716&set=a.318317388271849>

69 "Pokušali su da spale 300 ljudi" – Vasiljković o stravičnim scenama na ulicama Srbije: Naravno da su sve agresivniji, ostali su samo najveći ekstremisti", Kurir, 17 August 2025, <https://www.kurir.rs/vesti/politika/9751960/vasiljkovic-naravno-da-su-blokaderi-sve-agresivniji-ostale-su-samo-najvece-budale-i-ekstremisti>

Veselin Šljivančanin

In June, Veselin Šljivančanin and Dragan Vasiljković appeared on Informer TV, while Nebojša Bakarec joined the programme live.⁷⁰ The following month, on the same television channel, Šljivančanin appeared alongside Gavriilo Kovačević, President of the Municipality of Zemun, on the anniversary of Operation Storm, carried out by the Croatian Army and Police.⁷¹

On the occasion of the anniversary of the Battle of Košare, Milica Đurđević Stamenkovski led the state wreath-laying ceremony and was photographed with Veselin Šljivančanin.⁷²

** Veselin Šljivančanin served as an officer of the JNA and later the YA during the 1990s, and was one of the commanders of JNA forces during the fighting around Vukovar in 1991. The ICTY sentenced him to 10 years' imprisonment for the war crime committed against Croatian wounded persons and prisoners of war at the Ovčara farm near Vukovar.*

Alen Ristić

At an SNS rally held in Sombor in March 2025, Alen Ristić was among the prominent supporters and local councillors associated with the party.⁷³

** During the armed conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Alen Ristić was a member of a volunteer unit of the Army of Republika Srpska. Together with two fellow fighters, he was convicted by a domestic court in 2013 for a brutal war crime involving looting, murder, abuse, and the rape of several Bosniak civilians in Bijeljina in June 1992. In April 1992, the Serbian Volunteer Guard had taken control of the town through a series of crimes and a campaign of terror.*

70 "Info Jutro – Uhapšen Glavašev monstrum", Informer, YouTube video, 16 June 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wJexwcPq49A&t=571s>

71 "Info Dan – Oluja: Zločin koji traje", Informer, YouTube video, 4 August 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WM4rykQoQeY>

72 Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Policy, "Đurđević Stamenkovski: Čuvaćemo najveći spomenik junaka sa Košara – slobodu naše otadžbine", 14 June 2025, <https://www.minrzs.gov.rs/sr/aktuelnosti/vesti/djurdjjevic-stamenkovski-cuvacemo-najveci-spomenik-junaka-sa-kosara-slobodu-nase-otadzbine>

73 "YIHR: Ako o prošlosti učimo selektivno, kako možemo da se borimo da se ne ponovi?", Soinfo.org, 28 March 2025, <https://www.soinfo.org/vesti/vest/32964/yihr-ako-o-proslosti-ucimo-selektivno-kako-mozemo-da-se-borimo-da-se-ne-ponovi/>

Other Individuals Accused Of or Associated with War Crimes

Milorad Ulemek

The Provincial Secretariat for Culture allocated funds for the purchase of books authored by Milorad Ulemek Legija. More than 50 copies were acquired and distributed to libraries across Vojvodina. Following public criticism, however, most notably from the Movement of Free Citizens, the decision was withdrawn in August 2025.⁷⁴

** Milorad Ulemek Legija is a former member of the Serbian Volunteer Guard and former commander of the Special Operations Unit (JSO). He was sentenced to 40 years' imprisonment for the murders of Prime Minister Zoran Đinđić and Ivan Stambolić, and for the attempted murder of Vuk Drašković.*

Živojin Ivanović

In March, Goran Radosavljević Guri and a group of individuals wearing Red Beret uniforms visited the improvised camp in Belgrade's Pioneer Park to express support for government supporters opposed to the university blockades.⁷⁵ According to media reports, some of those present were former members of the JSO, including Živojin Ivanović, known as Žika Crnogorac, who physically assaulted a citizen during the event.⁷⁶

The Special Operations Unit (JSO), also known as the Red Berets, was a unit within the State Security Service of the Ministry of the Interior. The JSO took part in all major battlefields during the 1990s, as well as in political assassinations, including the assassination of Prime Minister Zoran Đinđić, the murder of Ivan Stambolić, and the attempted assassination of Vuk Drašković. In the proceedings before the ICTY and the IRMCT against State Security chiefs Jovica Stanišić and Franko Simatović, it was

⁷⁴ "Pokrajina izdvojila novac za otkup knjiga Milorada Ulemeka Legije: U bibliotekama Vojvodine već 50-ak primeraka", nova.rs, 24 June 2025, <https://nova.rs/vesti/drustvo/pokrajina-izdvojila-novac-za-otkup-knjiga-milorada-ulemeka-legije-u-bibliotekama-vojvodine-vec-50-tak-primeraka/>

⁷⁵ "Ko su veterani 'Crvenih beretki' u Pionirskom parku: Guri i Žika Crnogorac", N1, 11 March 2025, <https://n1info.rs/vesti/ko-su-veterani-crvenih-beretki-u-pionirskom-parku/>

⁷⁶ Ibid.

established beyond reasonable doubt that members of the Red Berets participated in a number of war crimes.⁷⁷ Živojin Ivanović was one of the commanders of the Red Berets, and the IRMCT Office of the Prosecutor has stated that he was responsible for war crimes, particularly crimes involving the forced displacement of civilians in Baranja and Zapadni Srem.⁷⁸

Ljubiša Diković

At the commemoration marking the anniversary of the breakthrough of the Strymian Front, Ljubiša Diković addressed the audience.⁷⁹ The ceremony was led by Miloš Vučević, then Prime Minister, in the presence of a delegation from the Ministry of Defence and the Serbian Armed Forces. Diković also spoke in May at a ceremonial academy marking Victory Day, attended by Prime Minister Đuro Macut, President of the National Assembly Ana Brnabić, President of the Government of AP Vojvodina Maja Gojković, Chief of the General Staff of the Serbian Armed Forces Milan Mojsilović, numerous government ministers, and senior officials from the Minister of Defence and the Chief of the General Staff.⁸⁰ Diković also addressed participants at the previously mentioned panel discussion, The Role and Importance of Special Police Units, held in May at the University of Criminal Investigation and Police Studies.⁸¹

** Ljubiša Diković is a former Chief of the General Staff of the Serbian Armed Forces. During the Kosovo war, he commanded the 37th Motorised Brigade, which was involved in war crimes against the Albanian population. On the basis of evidence presented by the Humanitarian Law Center, War Crimes Prosecutor Vladimir Vukčević announced the opening of an investigation. Reacting to this announcement, Tomislav Nikolić, then President of the Republic, told him to “think carefully about what he is digging into in Serbia”.*

77 IRMCT, Stanišić and Simatović judgment, 31 May 2023, https://www.irmct.org/sites/default/files/case_documents/IRMCT-Appeal-Judgement-Stanisic-Simatovic-ENG.pdf

78 Ibid, p. 260.

79 Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Serbia, “Obeležena 80. godišnjica proboja Sremskog fronta”, 11 April 2025, <https://www.mod.gov.rs/cir/22182/obelezena-80-godisnjica-proboja-sremskog-fronta22182>

80 Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Serbia, “Održana svečana akademija povodom Dana pobede u Narodnom pozorištu”, 9 May 2025, <https://www.mod.gov.rs/cir/22254/odrzana-svecana-akademija-povodom-dana-pobede-u-narodnom-pozoristu>

81 M.R., “Heroji otadžbine na jednom mestu! Tribina ‘U čast i slavu komandantu PJP, generalu Obradu Stevanoviću’”, *Telegraf*, 22 May 2025, <https://www.telegraf.rs/vesti/srbija/4112803-heroji-otadzbine-na-jednom-mestu-tribina-u-cast-i-slavu-komandantu-pjp-generalu-obradu-stevanovicu>

Obrad Stevanović

In May, Lieutenant Colonel Miroslav Vulić of the Ministry of the Interior appeared on Prva TV, where he spoke favourably about the Special Police Units and their former commander, Obrad Stevanović.⁸² That same month, the University of Criminal Investigation and Police Studies hosted a panel discussion marking the anniversary of the establishment of the Special Police Units and honouring Stevanović, who had died in April 2025.⁸³ At the previously mentioned patron saint's day celebration of the Association of Veterans of the Special Police Units, Ivica Dačić and Nikola Šainović, alongside Dragan Vasiljević and Vlastimir Đorđević, unveiled a bust of Stevanović. On that occasion, Stevanović was described as "an honourable, distinguished and highly capable police officer and a great patriot".⁸⁴

** During the wars of the 1990s, Obrad Stevanović commanded the Special Police Units, which participated in war crimes in Kosovo, as established in the ICTY judgment against Vlastimir Đorđević. During the trial of Slobodan Milošević, evidence emerged that Stevanović had knowledge of efforts to conceal the bodies of killed Kosovo Albanians.*

Slobodan Milošević

On Saint Vitus Day in June, Snežana Paunović, Minister of Public Administration and Local Self-Government, shared on her Instagram account a photograph of Slobodan Milošević at Gazimestan in 1989, accompanied by the caption: "They never forgave him for St, Vitus Day at Gazimestan; they never forgave him for awakening national consciousness".⁸⁵

In December, during Ljiljana Smajlović's programme Relativizacija, Marko Milošević, an SPS MP and grandson of Slobodan Milošević, questioned "how it was possible that members of parliament who had been part of the government at the time were not troubled by the violation of the Constitution when citizens were extradited to the Hague Tribunal".⁸⁶ During the same appearance, he praised his grandfather, stating that Slobodan Milošević had defended the entire Serbian people in The Hague against accusations of genocide. That same month, Marko Milošević, Ivica Dačić and Snežana Paunović sang a song dedicated to Slobodan Milošević at an event marking the 35th anniversary of the Zlatibor branch of the SPS: "Slobodan, Slobodan, our dewy flower, Serbia, Serbia will

82 "Koja je uloga posebnih jedinica policije? - Jutro", Prva, YouTube video, 26 May 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-5qy4c5MGP8>

83 M.R., "Heroji otadžbine na jednom mestu! Tribina 'U čast i slavu komandantu PJP, generalu Obradu Stevanoviću'", Telegraf, 22 May 2025, <https://www.telegraf.rs/vesti/srbija/4112803-heroji-otadzbine-na-jednom-mestu-tribina-u-cast-i-slavu-komandantu-pjp-generalu-obradu-stevanovicu>

84 Instagram post by the Ministry of the Interior, 8 November 2025, https://www.instagram.com/p/DQzAHY6j00L/?img_index=6

85 Instagram post by Snežana Paunović, 28 June 2025, https://www.instagram.com/p/DLb-80gMFSJ/?img_index=1

86 "Marko Milošević: Nismo 1999. pobedili NATO, ali tad nismo ni ostali bez Kosova", Relativizacija, YouTube video, 11 December 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9fIZefpojgs>

never forget you (Slobodane, Slobodane, naše rosno cveće, Srbija te, Srbija te zaboraviti neće)”.⁸⁷

** During the 1990s, Slobodan Milošević served as President of the Republic of Serbia and of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The ICTY indicted him for crimes committed in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo, including genocide, complicity in genocide, deportation, murder, persecution on political, racial, and religious grounds, extermination, imprisonment, and torture. His trial began in 2002. Milošević died in detention in 2006 before the proceedings were concluded.*

Dragoslav Bokan

In June, the Government of Serbia appointed Dragoslav Bokan as Chair of the Governing Board of the National Theatre in Belgrade.⁸⁸ Bokan has also been a member of the Council of the Faculty of Philology since 2023, despite a petition submitted by students of the faculty that same year.

** Dragoslav Bokan is the founder of the former paramilitary unit the “White Eagles”, which participated in the wars in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina and has been linked to war crimes committed by the group associated with Milan Lukić, including the abductions in Štrpci and Sjeverin, as well as a number of crimes in eastern Bosnia and Herzegovina, including the brutal crimes committed in Višegrad.*

⁸⁷ “‘Slobodane, naše rosno cveće’ Dačić i unuk Miloševića pevali pesmu o bivšem predsedniku na proslavi SPS-a na Zlatiboru (video)”, Blic, 28 December 2025, <https://www.blic.rs/vesti/politika/dacic-i-slobin-unuk-pevali-pesmu-o-bivsem-predsedniku-slobodane-nase-rosno-cvece/xwzd7gp>

⁸⁸ “Osnivač paravojne jedinice na čelu Upravnog odbora Narodnog pozorišta u Beogradu”, Radio Free Europe, 19 June 2025, <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/dragoslav-bokan-narodno-pozoriste-beograd-srbija/33449207.html>

Denial of Specific War Crimes

Srebrenica Genocide

As in previous years, the genocide in Srebrenica remained the single most frequently denied crime, both by government representatives and by broader segments of the public.

In February, then Deputy Prime Minister Aleksandar Vulin, while commenting on and criticising the protests and blockades in Serbia, stated that he expected “Bono Vox to support the protests in Serbia after Marina Abramović and Madonna. So far, this trio has never missed an opportunity to support the bombing of Serbia and to condemn the Serbs for the siege of Sarajevo and the fake genocide in Srebrenica”.⁸⁹ In the same vein, Nikola Selaković stated later that month that the aim of the protests and blockades was to weaken Serbia and force a weakened Serbia to accept and acknowledge, among other things, “that genocide was committed in Srebrenica and that we are a genocidal people”.⁹⁰ In May, Aleksandar Vučić criticised the student protests, stating that the students would eventually have to make their political positions clear and that this would include declaring that genocide had been committed in Srebrenica.⁹¹ He made a similar comment in June, stating that the students “are not even prepared to state whether Srebrenica was a grave crime or a genocide because doing so would upset some of their vital and key sponsors”.⁹² Although Vučić expressed condolences to the families of the victims on the anniversary of the genocide itself, he did not refer to the crime as genocide.⁹³ By contrast, his party colleague Ana Brnabić explicitly rejected the characterisation of the crime in Srebrenica as genocide on the same day, stating that it was “absolutely not genocide” and adding that “genocide is what happened to the Serbs in the Independent State of Croatia during the Second World War”.⁹⁴

At a ceremonial academy and awards event honouring veterans of the “Defensive Homeland War 1991–1999”, held in Ruma, Milica

89 “Vulin: Nedostaje samo podrška Bono Voksa”, *Politika*, 2 February 2025, <https://www.politika.rs/sr/clanak/658593/vulin-nedostaje-samo-podraska-bono-voksa>

90 “Nikola Selaković: Do izlaza iz trenutne situacije jedino dijalogom”, *Politika*, 18 February 2025, <https://www.politika.rs/sr/clanak/661913/nikola-selakovic-do-izlaza-iz-trenutne-situacije-jedino-dijalogom>

91 “Vučić studente nazvao banditima, proteste ‘putujućim cirkusom’, pominjao i Srebrenicu”, *Fokus.ba*, 21 May 2025, <https://www.fokus.ba/vijesti/globus/vucic-studente-nazvao-banditima-proteste-putujucim-cirkusom-pominjao-i-srebrenicu/3462583/>

92 “Vučić: Nikada nisam ni imao ni koristio Skaj aplikaciju, niti bilo ko iz moje porodice”, *RTS Sajt – Zvanični kanal*, 3 June 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JWcuHFupLGU>

93 “Vučić na engleskom izrazio saučešće porodicama ubijenih u Srebrenici”, *N1*, 11 July 2025, <https://n1info.rs/vesti/vucic-na-engleskom-izrazio-saucesce-porodicama-ubijenih-u-srebrenici/>

94 *Ibid.*

Đurđević Stamenkovski stated, among other things, that “anyone who knows what our fighters did in Republika Srpska cannot fall for the deception of those who claim that Serbia committed genocide and that Republika Srpska is a genocidal creation”.⁹⁵

In August, Dragutin Matanović, a member of the NIS Board of Directors, published a column on Informer’s website in which he described Aida Ćorović as a “hard-line anti-Serb” who was seeking help from protesting students to “force the Serbs to admit that they are genocidal”. He further argued that many opposition politicians occupy a “consistently anti-Serb position” because they condemn the denial of the genocide in Srebrenica.⁹⁶

* For most of the war in BiH, the town of Srebrenica in eastern Bosnia was an enclave where tens of thousands of Bosnian Muslims/Bosniaks sought refuge after fleeing attacks by Bosnian Serb forces in surrounding areas. In March 1995, Radovan Karadžić, President of Republika Srpska and Supreme Commander of the VRS, ordered Bosnian Serb forces to eliminate the Muslim population from the enclaves of Srebrenica and Žepa. In July 1995, nearly 8,000 Muslim men and boys were killed or went missing, while approximately 30,000 women, children and elderly persons were forcibly displaced. The ICTY and the IRMCT prosecuted twenty individuals for crimes committed in Srebrenica in July 1995. Radovan Karadžić, Ljubiša Beara, Željko Tolimir, Vujadin Popović, Radislav Krstić and Ratko Mladić were convicted of genocide. **In its 2007 judgment in the case brought by Bosnia and Herzegovina against the FRY, later Serbia, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) found that Serbia had violated the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide by failing to do all within its power to prevent the genocide, by failing to punish or transfer the perpetrators to the ICTY, and by violating its obligation to comply with the ICJ’s provisional measures.**

War Crimes in Kosovo

On the anniversary of the Račak massacre, Milovan Drecun stated that “for two and a half decades there has been an attempt to turn the truth about Račak into a lie and to portray the event as an alleged massacre”, arguing that it had in fact been an anti-terrorist operation and that no civilians had been killed.⁹⁷

On the anniversary of Kosovo’s declaration of independence, the Government’s Office for Kosovo and Metohija issued a statement claiming that the “secessionist movement in Kosovo and Metohija has brought suffering, hatred, exoduses, regression and chronic

⁹⁵ Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Policy, “Đurđević sa herojima Košara i Paštrika: Dali ste sve, samo da biste imali nas!”, 29 June 2026, <https://www.minrzs.gov.rs/sr/aktuelnosti/vesti/djurdjjevic-sa-herojima-kosara-i-pastrika-dali-ste-sve-samo-da-biste-imali-nas>

⁹⁶ “Kolumna Dragana Matanovića: Da ne zaboravimo zločine počinjene u Kravici i Bratuncu”, Informer, 1 August 2025, <https://informer.rs/politika/kolumne/1039848/dragutin-matanovic-kolumna>

⁹⁷ “Drecun: Činjenice o Račku potpuno drugačije od lažnog narativa Prištine”, Kosovo Online, 14 January 2025, <https://www.kosovo-online.com/vesti/politika/drecun-cinjenice-o-racku-potpuno-drugacije-od-laznog-narativa-pristine-14-1-2025>

instability to our region” and that “many Albanians, Serbs and members of other communities suffered because of the idea of the so-called ‘independent Kosovo’”.⁹⁸ In doing so, the statement ignored the context in which Kosovo’s secession occurred, including the widespread human rights violations committed against the Albanian population by the Serbian authorities during the 1990s. At an event marking the anniversary of the start of the 1999 NATO bombing campaign against Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić stated in his speech that “we have nothing to be ashamed of”, adding: “We honour our heroes who fought for freedom (...) Endless gratitude to those who showed that honour and courage know no limits”.⁹⁹ The event was attended by the President of the National Assembly, the Prime Minister, government ministers, members of parliament, the Chief of the General Staff, senior officials from the Ministry of Defence and the Serbian Armed Forces, and representatives of local self-government.

In March, a short article on the Račak massacre was published on the official website of Radio Television of Serbia (RTS). The article denied that a crime had taken place and quoted former investigating judge Danica Marinković, who had testified in defence of Slobodan Milošević before the Hague Tribunal, boasting that no one had ever been indicted or convicted for the Račak massacre.¹⁰⁰ The article also asked “what was the reason for the NATO alliance to descend upon a small European country at all”, while stating that between 1,200 and 2,500 people had been killed during the bombing campaign.¹⁰¹

In March, in an interview with the Swiss weekly *Weltwoche*, Vučić cynically commented on the NATO bombing campaign, comparing it to Russia’s aggression against Ukraine: “And when they have to say one sentence, they say: we prevented a major humanitarian catastrophe in Kosovo. Exactly the same sentence the Russians used in Donetsk and Luhansk. And now I ask my friends in the West: tell me, what were you doing in 1999?”¹⁰² He also stated that NATO had found “a sufficient reason, as always, a single incident (Račak, authors’ note), which we believe was an anti-terrorist operation against well-armed terrorists in Kosovo, and they claimed that those 50 or 52 people were civilians and used that as the basis for their final decision against Serbia”.¹⁰³

In June, Miloš Vučević, President of the SNS and Adviser to the President of the Republic on Regional Affairs, travelled from Novi Sad with a group of bikers to support regime supporters gathered in the improvised camp in Belgrade’s Pioneer Park. Speaking to

98 Government of Serbia, Office for Kosovo and Metohija, “Priština proslavlja nepostojeći praznik nepostojeće države, Srbija nikada neće pristati na otimanje sopstvene teritorije”, 17 February 2025, <https://www.kim.gov.rs/v5774.php>

99 Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Serbia, “Predsednik Vučić: Beskrajno hvala onima koji su pokazali da čojstvo i junaštvo nemaju granicu”, 24 March 2025, <https://www.mod.gov.rs/cir/22129/predsednik-vucic-beskrajno-hvala-onima-koji-su-pokazali-da-cojstvo-i-junastvo-nemaju-granicu22129>

100 “Račak – neistina koja je bila okidač za bombardovanje SRJ”, RTS, 25 March 2025, [https://www.rts.rs/lat/rts/dijaspora/srbija-na-vezi/5681809/racak---](https://www.rts.rs/lat/rts/dijaspora/srbija-na-vezi/5681809/racak---neistina-koja-je-bila-okidac-za-bombardovanje-srj.html)

101 Ibid.

102 “Vučić za *Veltvohe*: Sve što nam je Zapad uradio vraća se kao bumerang, bombardovanje bilo presedan”, RTV, 25 March 2025, https://www.rtv.rs/sr_lat/politika/vucic-sve-sto-nam-je-zapad-uradio-vraca-se-kao-bumerang-bombardovanje-bilo-presedan_1616194.html

103 Ibid.

Informer TV on that occasion, Vučević criticised the student protests, stating that many of those taking part were people who “not only want to recognise Kosovo, they want to say that we are a genocidal people, that we committed genocide (...) do not forget that Nataša Kandić said that people should go to Batajnica on St. Vitus Day and light candles where there are supposedly mass graves of Albanians”.¹⁰⁴

In July, commenting on an incident in Novi Pazar in which dissatisfied citizens struck the city’s police chief, Nermin Ljajić, on the head with a bottle, Minister of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Policy Milica Đurđević Stamenkovski stated: “that image, unfortunately, is strikingly reminiscent of the scenes from 1981, when Albanian separatists in Kosovo and Metohija, under the guise of student protests, pushed children and young people to the front lines while carrying banners reading: ‘Kosovo Republic’”.¹⁰⁵ In August, she attended a memorial service for members of the 124th Intervention Brigade of the Special Police Units who were killed during the Kosovo war. The brigade has been linked to war crimes committed during that conflict. Minister Đurđević Stamenkovski was also photographed with the flag of the 549th Motorised Brigade of the Yugoslav Army, within whose area of responsibility Serbian forces killed thousands of Albanian civilians.¹⁰⁶

In relation to a protest held in Tirana in October in support of former Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) leaders standing trial before the Kosovo Specialist Chambers in The Hague, Šaip Kamberi, an ethnic Albanian member of parliament in the Serbian National Assembly, shared a photograph from the protest on his Facebook account with the caption: “The KLA’s struggle against fascism was and will forever remain pure”.¹⁰⁷ By making such a statement, Kamberi undoubtedly denied the crimes committed by the KLA against members of the Serbian, Albanian and Roma communities, as well as other minority groups, during the Kosovo war.

War Crimes in Bosnia and Herzegovina

At the ceremonial parade held in Banja Luka to mark Republika Srpska Day, a delegation from Serbia attended, comprising government ministers as well as representatives of the Ministry of Defence and the Serbian Armed Forces. On that occasion, Bratislav Gašić congratulated Republika Srpska on its national day, stating: “We will forever preserve what our ancestors left to

104 “‘Srbija se voli i čuva na Vidovdan’: Vučević sa bajkerima krenuo da podrži studente u Pionirskom parku [Video]”, *Informer*, 28 June 2025, <https://informer.rs/politika/vesti/10297779/milos-vucevic-bajkeri-pionirski-park>

105 Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Policy, “Đurđević Stamenkovski: Scene iz Novog Pazara podsećaju na Kosovo 1981. godine”, 29 July 2026, <https://www.minrzs.gov.rs/sr/aktuelnosti/vesti/djurdjevic-stamenkovski-scene-iz-novog-pazara-podsecaju-na-kosovo-1981-godine>

106 Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Policy, “Đurđević sa borcima u Žiči: Vaš podvig nas obavezuje da sačuvamo Srbiju”, 30 August 2025, <https://www.minrzs.gov.rs/sr/aktuelnosti/vesti/djurdjevic-sa-borcima-u-zici-vas-podvig-nas-obavezuje-da-sacuvamo-srbiju>

107 Facebook post by Šaip Kamberi, 17 October 2025, <https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=1278897694040523&set=a.327246375872331>

us”.¹⁰⁸ Addressing those gathered, Siniša Karan, Minister of the Interior of Republika Srpska, declared that “today we celebrate our statehood with immense gratitude to all the heroes who took part in the defence of Republika Srpska”.¹⁰⁹ As at similar events and ceremonies, there was no mention of the war crimes and genocide committed by the military and police forces of Republika Srpska. Miloš Vučević likewise stated on Facebook: “May this day inspire us to preserve and strengthen what our ancestors won through struggle and entrusted to us”.¹¹⁰ In another post published in June, he referred to the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina as the “defensive homeland war”, adding that it was important to preserve “the legacy of those who paid the highest and ultimate price – the people who gave their lives for Republika Srpska”.¹¹¹

Responding to allegations that the authorities had used a sonic weapon against demonstrators during the large student protest on 15 March, Vučević commented that “as a people, we are tired of those lies, of Markale, Račak...”.¹¹²

On the occasion of the 26th anniversary of the NATO bombing campaign, the Mayor of Novi Sad, Žarko Mićin, opened an exhibition of photographs from the publication *Foreign Propaganda and the Serbs in the Final Decades of the Twentieth Century* by Dejan Kragić at the Archives of Vojvodina.¹¹³ One of the photographs presented as an example of propaganda was the image that appeared on the cover of *Time* magazine in the summer of 1992, depicting Fikret Alić behind barbed wire at the Trnopolje camp in Prijedor, in a severely weakened physical condition.¹¹⁴ Presenting the camp experience in this manner in a public exhibition constitutes a form of denial of the war crimes committed in Prijedor, where large numbers of non-Serb civilians were persecuted and killed during the 1990s.¹¹⁵ The same exhibition was displayed at the Archives of Užice in May 2025, where it was opened by Živojin Rakočević, President of the Journalists’ Association of Serbia.¹¹⁶

In April, the authorities organised a “People’s Assembly” under the slogan *We Will Not Give Up Serbia* in front of the National

108 Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Serbia, “Ministar Gašić na svečanom defileu u Banjaluci povodom Dana Republike Srpske”, 9 January 2025, <https://www.mod.gov.rs/cir/21937/ministar-gasic-na-svecanom-defileu-u-banjaluci-povodom-dana-republike-srpske21937>

109 Ibid.

110 Facebook post by Miloš Vučević, 28 February 2025, https://www.facebook.com/milosvucevicsns/posts/pfbid0r7qRsn2h5E4rjXDN56PmyqP5DfXGoSqRonk8HQ6kmerRYhCjU9JcamWxBgaCXoUl?notif_id=1740776133733237¬if_t=notify_me_page&ref=notif

111 Facebook post by Miloš Vučević, 10 June 2025, <https://www.facebook.com/reel/1225858252574516>

112 N.Š., “Propagandna mašinerija u punoj snazi – Vučević: Srbi su umorni od laži poput Markala”, *oslobodenje.ba*, 18 March 2025, <https://www.oslobodenje.ba/vijesti/bih/propagandna-masinerija-u-punoj-snazi-vucevic-srbi-su-umorni-od-lazi-poput-markala-1028946/>

113 “Otvorena izložba ‘Strana propaganda i Srbi poslednjih decenija 20. veka’ u Arhivu Novog Sada”, *RTV 24* March 2025, https://www.rtv.rs/sr_lat/vojvodina/novi-sad/otvorena-izlozba-strana-propaganda-i-srbi-poslednjih-decenija-20.-veka-u-arhivu-novog-sada_1615838.html

114 Nihad Kreševljaković, “Čovjek i fotografija: Fikret Alić, logoraš sa naslovnice *Timea*”, *Al Jazeera Balkans*, 6 August 2022, <https://balkans.aljazeera.net/blogs/2022/8/6/covjek-i-fotografija-fikret-alic-logoras-sa-naslovnice-timea>

115 Logor Trnopolje, Glas žrtava, Mreža pomirenja “REKOM”: <https://www.glaszrtava.org/prijedor/trnopolje/>

116 “Izložba: Strana štampa i propaganda protiv Srba”, *Infoera*, 9 May 2025, <https://infoera.rs/2025/05/09/izlozba-strana-stampa-i-propaganda-protiv-srba/>

Assembly building. The event was attended by numerous state officials and featured an address by Aleksandar Vučić. Officials and citizens gathered there were entertained by singer Mirko Pajčin, better known as Baja Mali Knindža, whose repertoire includes songs from the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina that glorify war and war crimes.¹¹⁷

In an interview with the Bosnia and Herzegovina media outlet Klix in June, Ušame Zukorlić relativised the fact that Serbian institutions and officials refuse to recognise and continue to deny the judgments of international courts. Asked by the journalist when Serbia would extradite Novak Đukić to Bosnia and Herzegovina to serve his sentence for the 1995 Tuzla Gate crime, Zukorlić replied that this was a matter to be discussed and agreed upon by the authorities of the two countries.¹¹⁸

War Crimes in Croatia

In July, the Government of Serbia adopted a proposal put forward by the Ministry for Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Policy to include the Day of Remembrance for Serbs Killed in the Criminal Operation Flash and the Battle of Paštrik in the 2026 calendar of state commemorations. Commenting on the decision, Minister Milica Đurđević Stamenkovski stated that “it is our duty to commemorate the events that have shaped the pages of our history and to leave future generations a legacy of knowledge, pride and self-confidence rooted in truth”.¹¹⁹

At the end of the year, Boris Bratina, Minister of Information and Telecommunications, stated that Croats must be punished for their participation in the First and Second World Wars, and especially for events from the 1990s to the present day, adding that they “must pay with their territory”.¹²⁰

War Crimes in General

In March, at a conference presenting a team of professors, academics and prominent public and cultural figures participating in the project Serbian National Interest – Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow, Đorđe Milićević, Minister without Portfolio responsible for coordinating activities and measures in the field of relations with the diaspora, stated that the project’s objective was to systematically

117 “Baja Mali Knindža je ovako podizao atmosferu usred Beograda: ‘Ja sam srpski pevač i mesto mi je tu’ [video]”, K1 info, 12 April 2025, <https://www.k1info.rs/vesti/politika/81138/baja-mali-knindza-na-saboru-ne-damo-srbiju/vest>

118 “Ministar Zukorlić gost Klix Studija o gorućim temama na Balkanu”, YouTube video, 24 June 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eLW3ELPceho>

119 Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Policy, “Bljesak i Paštrik prvi put u državnom programu”, 17 July 2025, <https://www.minrzs.gov.rs/srb-lat/aktuelnosti/vesti/bljesak-i-pastrik-prvi-put-u-drzavnom-programu>

120 “Medved i Bratina u klinču Srpski ministar potkačio Hrvatsku, Ukrajinu i ‘plaćanje teritorijom’, odgovori stigli iz Zagreba i Kijeva: ‘U zatvorena usta muva ne ulazi”, Blic, 19 December 2025, <https://www.blic.rs/vesti/politika/boris-bratina-hrvatska-i-ukrajina-teritorijom-da-plate-ucesce-u-ratovima-reagovali/5bz0sv1>

combat historical revisionism, which, according to him, the Serbian people have faced for centuries.¹²¹ He emphasised that the Serbian people had never fought wars of conquest and that “today, some are trying to take that truth away from us and portray the victim and the liberator as the aggressor, and the aggressor as the victim”.¹²²

At a ceremony in Kruševac in October for the presentation of Veterans’ Medals, attended alongside the Minister of Defence, Milica Đurđević Stamenkovski, Minister of for Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Policy, stated that the medal was a testament to a challenging period that “we, as a people, endured”, and that it should remain with those “who live today in peace and stability and who should know that this peace was paid for with the highest price a nation can bear”.¹²³

Non-Institutional Denial

In June, the Serbian Literary Cooperative hosted the presentation of Radovan Karadžić’s book *Black Fairy Tale: Collected Poems*, published jointly by the Serbian Literary Cooperative, the Serbian National Council of Montenegro, and the Centre for Serbian Studies from Banja Luka.¹²⁴ During the event, a birthday telegram was sent to Karadžić, conveying congratulations and words of support: “With faith and hope that justice will finally prevail and that we will celebrate your future birthdays together.” The telegram was signed by several participants, including Miloš Ković and Milo Lompar, both well-known professors at the University of Belgrade.

The Serbian Orthodox Church has played a notable role since the 1990s in denying war crimes, glorifying convicted war criminals, and promoting a narrative of self-victimisation. Thus, at the funeral of Nebojša Pavković in October, the funeral service was officiated by Bishop Jerotej of Šabac and Bishop Dositej of Lipljan and Military Bishop. Acting as an envoy of Patriarch Porfirije, Bishop Dositej addressed those gathered with the following words:

“Here, where earth and heaven meet, we bid farewell to one of Serbia’s sons, who spent his life in the service of his people and his Homeland. (...) When the days of trial came, when justice was hidden behind the interests of the powerful, he, like many before him,

121 “Miličević: ‘Srpski nacionalni interesi juče, danas, sutra’ se bori protiv revizionizma”, RTS, 26 March 2025, <https://www.rts.rs/lat/rts/dijaspora/vesti/5682709/milicevic-srpski-nacionalni-interesi-juce-danas-sutra-se-bori-protiv-revizionizma.html>

122 Ibid.

123 Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Policy, “Đurđević Stamenkovski: Boračka spomenica je svedočanstvo teškog vremena koje smo hrabro izdržali”, 15 October 2025, <https://www.minrzs.gov.rs/sr/aktuelnosti/vesti/djurdjevic-stamenkovski-boracka-spomenica-je-svedocanstvo-teskog-vremena-koje-smo-hrabro-izdrzali>

124 Serbian Literary Cooperative, “U sali SKZ predstavljena knjiga Radovana Karadžića – ‘Crna bajka: sabrane pesme’”, 19 June 2025, <https://srpskajnizevnazadruga.rs/u-sali-skz-predstavljena-knjiga-radovana-karadzica-%e2%80%92-crna-bajka-sabrane-pesme/>

became a symbol of those unjustly convicted. Yet he did not falter. As a Christian, he accepted his cross and bore it with dignity, believing that justice is not delivered by man but by God, and that the final word belongs to God, who is Truth. (...) In his fate we see reflected the fate of our people; a people who know what it means to suffer, but also what it means to forgive; a people who do not renounce their heroes, yet do not elevate them out of pride, but out of gratitude. (...) Thank you for the example of steadfastness. Thank you for the silence that speaks louder than words. Thank you for a life that became a testimony. (...) General, every age has its battles. You fought yours honourably. May the Lord grant you rest among the righteous, and may your name remain inscribed among those who knew how to serve rather than rule. Your sacrifice, General, was not in vain. (...) Blessed is the one who, at the end of life, can say the words of Holy Scripture: 'I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.'¹²⁵

In November, the Cultural and Historical Centre Srpska Krupa posthumously awarded Pavković the Order of the "Serbian Knight of Honour - First Class" for his "exceptional merits in honourably carrying out his duties in the protection of the constitutional order and territorial integrity of the Republic of Serbia".¹²⁶ Reacting to a statement by activist Mila Pajić, who described Pavković as a war criminal, the Association of Veterans - Heroes of Košare and Paštrik and the Veterans' Association "Košare" stated that this was "a continuation of the anti-Serb campaign that seeks to turn the truth upside down and make the victim into the perpetrator".¹²⁷ They further argued that Pavković had been unjustly convicted in a "political trial", that he was not a criminal but a hero, and that "without a shred of shame, Mila Pajić spews poisonous words and serves foreign interests".

Convicted war criminals themselves frequently take part in broader campaigns denying war crimes. On the anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide, Vojislav Šešelj promoted his book *There Was No Genocide in Srebrenica* in Knez Mihailova Street in central Belgrade.¹²⁸ During the event, supporters and members of Šešelj's Serbian Radical Party seized a banner reading "Death to Fascism" from an activist and forced her away from the stand where the books were being displayed. Appearing on Informer TV in November, Šešelj stated: "I did not agree when that boulevard was named Zoran Đinđić Boulevard, but I am convinced that one day it will bear the name of General Ratko Mladić".¹²⁹ The programme host responded briefly: "Yes, it should. That would indeed be fair". In another media appearance, Šešelj stated that General Radislav Krstić - convicted of genocide in Srebrenica and one of the few

125 Serbian Orthodox Church, "Episkopi Jerotej i Dositej služili opelo generalu Nebojši Pavkoviću", 22 October 2025, <https://spc.rs/sr/news/aktuelno//15004.episkopi-jerotej-i-dositej-sluzili-opelo-generalu-nebojsi-pavkovicu.html#>

126 "General-pukovnik Nebojša Pavković posthumno odlikovan ordenom 'Srpskog viteza časti – prvog reda'", Radio Televizija Kragujevac, 6 November 2025, <https://rtk.co.rs/general-pukovnik-nebojsa-pavkovic-posthumno-odlikovan-ordenom-srpskog-viteza-casti-prvog-reda/>

127 "Udruženje veterana: General Pavković heroj koji je branio Srbiju, sramna izjava Mile Pajić", Tanjug, 1 October 2025, <https://www.tanjug.rs/srbija/politika/196205/udruzenja-veterana-general-pavkovic-heroj-koji-je-branio-srbiju-sramna-izjava-mile-pajic/vest>

128 "Aktivisti SRS oteli transparent 'Smrt fašizmu' i oterali aktivistkinju koja ga je nosila", N1, 11 July 2025, <https://n1info.rs/vesti/aktivisti-srs-oteli-transparent-smrt-fasizmu-i-oterali-aktivistkinju-koja-ga-je-nosila/>

129 Post on X, 15 November 2025, https://x.com/srpski_radikali/status/1989738065703915600?t=ZwUiHN1iaqggAaY2t_EaNA&s=19

senior officers to acknowledge the crime - had “slipped up” when he accepted responsibility for genocide in Srebrenica and was therefore a traitor. He also criticised Dragoljub Ojdanić, convicted of war crimes in Kosovo, for admitting crimes in order to secure early release from prison.¹³⁰ Šešelj further stated that he and his party support the introduction of prison sentences for anyone who says that genocide was committed in Srebrenica.¹³¹

Appearing on Informer TV, Vladimir Lazarević welcomed Pavković’s return to Serbia, stating: “General Pavković has spent more than twenty years imprisoned despite his innocence, simply because that is the wish of those who killed our people and devastated our country. (...) That is the usual practice of the so-called Hague Tribunal. They seek not only admissions of guilt, but plea bargains. As part of those bargains, they demand admissions of alleged crimes committed during the defence of our country”.¹³²

On St. Vitus Day, when a large student protest took place, regime supporters displayed a large banner in the improvised camp outside the National Assembly building carrying the message: “Blockaders, remember: Serbia is not a genocidal state”.¹³³

In December, a screening of the film *Republika Srpska: The Struggle for Freedom*, directed by Boris Malagurski, was held at the Faculty of Political Sciences in Belgrade. The event was organised by the faculty’s student organisation, the Serbian Political Forum.¹³⁴ The film presents a one-sided interpretation of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, while relativising and denying crimes committed by Serb forces, including the siege of Sarajevo.¹³⁵

Later that month, a scholarly conference entitled *The Politicisation of the War Crime in Srebrenica* was held in Belgrade. Participants concluded that “there was no genocide in Srebrenica because there was no intent to destroy the Bosniak population in its entirety, but rather an intention to politicise the crime against the Serbs”.¹³⁶ Among those taking part in the conference were Vinko Pandurević, Aleksandar Pavić and Gideon Greif, an Israeli historian known in the region for denying the genocide in

130 “Kod generala Pavkovića nema nikakve krivice! Šešelj o haškim optuženicima: Za ove je rekao da su izdajnici [Video]”, Informer, 27 September 2025, <https://informer.rs/tv/live-tv/1054255/vojislav-sepselj-nebojsa-pavkovic-hag>

131 Slavko Roksandić, “Šešelj traži da se uvede novo krivično delo: Predlažemo 20 godina zatvora”, Alo, 12 June 2025, <https://www.alo.rs/vesti/politika/276830/seselj-trazi-da-se-uvede-novo-krivicno-delo-predlazemo-20-godina-zatvora/vest.html>

132 “General nije prihvatio nikakve nagodbe! Lazarević o Pavkoviću: Hag mu je tražio da izda Srbiju i saborce [Video]”, Informer, 29 September 2025, <https://informer.rs/politika/vesti/1054701/vladimir-lazarevic-nebojsa-pavkovic-hag-nagodba>

133 Vojin Radovanović, “U ‘Čacilendu’ Vulin i novi transparent s porukom studentima u blokadama: Blokaderi, Srbija nije genocidna država [Foto]”, Danas, 28 June 2025, <https://www.danas.rs/vesti/politika/kod-cacilenda-razvijen-novi-transparent-s-porukom-studentima-u-blokadima-blokaderi-srbija-nije-genocidna-drzava/>

134 Faculty of Political Sciences, “Humanitarna projekcija filma ‘Republika Srpska, borba za slobodu’”, 3 December 2025, <https://www.fpn.bg.ac.rs/93988>

135 Film available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9LTAkgX72wg>

136 “U Beogradu održana konferencija o Srebrenici: Nije bio genocid, politizuje se zločin”, RTV, 25 December 2025, https://rtv.rs/sr_lat/politika/u-beogradu-odrzana-konferencija-o-srebrenici-nije-bio-genocid-politizuje-se-zlocin_1681069.html

Srebrenica.¹³⁷ The conference was organised by the Eurasian Security Forum, led by Mitar Kovač. A former professor at the Military Academy in Belgrade, Kovač served as an expert witness for the defence at Ratko Mladić's trial in 2015 and has previously been noted for denying the genocide in Srebrenica.

Media Denial/Media Instrumentalization of Perpetrators

In addition to state institutions and government officials, the media are among the most significant and influential carriers of denial narratives. They provide a platform for convicted war criminals, glorify them, and frequently promote topics and discussions that deny or relativise crimes committed during the wars of the 1990s. These practices of denial often also involve hate speech and discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity, religion, and political affiliation.

In a special programme on Informer TV marking Pavković's return to Serbia, Dragan Vučićević, owner and editor-in-chief of this media outlet, stated: "The moment someone says anything against Nebojša Pavković, know that they are the worst kind of scum, the worst kind of anti-Serb." He also described Pavković as a hero and the judgment against him as disgraceful.¹³⁸

Informer TV, together with the outlet's online portal, is one of the primary platforms on which convicted war criminals regularly appear, alongside government officials, representatives of pro-regime media and organisations, and various pseudo-experts who deny and relativise crimes while targeting political opponents and critics. For example, Veselin Šljivančanin appeared on a programme tellingly entitled *The Enemy Lurks*, devoted to the Hague Tribunal.¹³⁹ He also appeared on the same television station following the death of Nebojša Pavković, stating, among other things, that Pavković deserved to have a boulevard named after him.¹⁴⁰ Reacting to *They Are No Longer Here*, a theatre show about the genocide in Srebrenica staged by the Heartefact organisation, Informer published the following comment on its website: "Promoters of the blockaders in the centre of Belgrade are performing a Shqiptar play about the 'genocide in Srebrenica', which is just another in a series of absurdities coming from people who do everything against their own country".¹⁴¹ Appearing on Informer TV in June, Vesna Veizović, editor of the *Vaseljenska TV*

137 Conference available at https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLhDxzeTAv0JO_Q1Z1kGp9wqQzNG3yP298

138 "Vučićević zaplakao zbog generala Pavkovića: Suze u programu uživo, urednik 'Informer' nije mogao da izdrži (Video)", Informer, 28 September 2025, <https://informer.rs/politika/vesti/1054612/dragan-j-vucicevic-o-generalu-nebojsi-pavkovicu>

139 "Neprijatelj vreba – Haški tribunal u srpskim sudovima?! Gost: Veselin Šljivančanin", Informer, 29 May 2025, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=94zN_58VVfE

140 "Veselin Šljivančanin progovorio o Pavkoviću: Zašto general zaslužuje da dobije ulicu u Beogradu?!", Informer, 24 October 2025, <https://informer.rs/politika/vesti/1060971/pavkovic-sljivancanin-vojska-vucic>

141 "Bruka! Promoteri blokadera usred Beograda igraju šiptarsku predstavu o 'genocidu u Srebrenici' – među njima i Mirjana Karanović! [Foto]", Informer, 12 May 2025, <https://informer.rs/politika/vesti/1016921/promoteri-blokadera-predstava>

online portal, denied the genocide in Srebrenica and the existence of detention camps for Croats and Bosniaks in Serbia during the 1990s, linking Nataša Kandić, Sonja Biserko and Dinko Gruhonjić to the student protests and blockades in an apparent attempt to discredit the protest movement.¹⁴² On the same television station, Milana Vuković of the Centre for Social Stability sharply criticised the student movement: “Among the blockaders, we can often find people who openly promote on social media the narrative that genocide occurred in Srebrenica and who constantly try to attach that criminal, genocidal label to the Serbian people”.¹⁴³ Dragan Vasiljković described the activities of protesting students as “disgraceful” during a programme entitled Serbs Love Vučić, the Blockaders Are Ustasha.¹⁴⁴

Numerous other media outlets, including those holding national broadcasting licences, contribute to widespread narratives that deny war crimes and glorify convicted war criminals. In July, Happy TV aired a programme featuring Sonja Karadžić-Jovičević, daughter of Radovan Karadžić, and Tomo Kovač, former Minister of the Interior of Republika Srpska, during which Karadžić’s responsibility for the genocide in Srebrenica was denied. The guests also argued that the former authorities in Serbia had committed a grave injustice against Karadžić by extraditing him to the Hague Tribunal.¹⁴⁵

The documentary *Anatomy of a Deception – Srebrenica, which challenges judicially established facts regarding the genocide in Srebrenica, was aired in two episodes on 9 and 10 July on Prva TV, a broadcaster with a national licence.*¹⁴⁶

The daily newspaper Politika published a short interview with Vladimir Lazarević on the anniversary of the end of the NATO bombing campaign against Serbia. In the article, Lazarević was described as the “legendary commander of the Staff and the Priština Corps of the Third Army of the Yugoslav Army during the most difficult period in Kosovo and Metohija”,¹⁴⁷ without any mention that he is a convicted war criminal or that mass crimes were committed against the Albanian population in Kosovo. Following Pavković’s death, the same newspaper published an article beginning with the words: “Today, Serbia addresses you, your people - the people you served selflessly, without calculation, with the heart and faith of a soldier”.¹⁴⁸ The author went on to address the deceased general directly: “No injustice could break you, because you believed that truth moves slowly, but that it will prevail, and that the

142 “Info Jutro – Ovo su zaštitna lica blokadera”, Informer, YouTube video, 10. June 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D0mVcVUiuC8>

143 “Info Jutro: Blokader šokirao javnost monstruoznom izjavom”, Informer, YouTube video, 14 June 2025, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kE7vw_PtYRY&t=2253s

144 “Info Jutro – Srbi vole Vučića, blokaderi ustaše”, Informer, YouTube video, 6 June 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X1B7hZayMfK>

145 “17 godina od hapšenja Radovana Karadžića – Gnusna zavera protiv uticajnih Srba i ‘Direktiva 7’”, Jutarnji Program TV Happy, 21 July 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MoQs9E-mB0U>

146 Prva TV portal, “Anatomija obmane – Srebrenica” premijerno na Prvoj televiziji 9. i 10. jula!, 9.7.2025: <https://www.prva.rs/info/vesti/11051/anatomijaobmanesrebrenica-premijerno-na-prvoj-televiziji-9-i-10-jula/vest>

147 Toma Todorović, “Dan kada je prestala agresija NATO-a na našu zemlju”, Politika, 9 June 2025, <https://www.politika.rs/sr/clanak/681472/dan-kada-je-prestala-agresija-nato-a-na-nasu-zemlju>

148 Vladimir Vuković, “Generale, hvala ti za sve”, Politika, 20 October 2025, <https://www.politika.rs/scc/clanak/705035/pogledi/generale-hvala-ti-za-sve>

final judgment is not rendered in The Hague but before God. (...) Your name will be remembered not in speeches, but in prayers. For you were more than a general - you were a legacy to your people. (...) Thank you, General, for every battle, for every sacrifice, for the quiet dignity with which you preserved the honour of Serbia. Your people will not forget you - because forgetting is betrayal, and Serbia knows no betrayal".¹⁴⁹

Predrag Sarapa, host of the morning programme on Pink TV, criticised students and the opposition together with his guests in the context of the local elections in Kosjerić. On that occasion, he remarked that the opposition would have earned the admiration of "even William Walker (head of the OSCE Verification Mission during the Kosovo war, authors' note), who dressed up Shqiptar terrorists in Račak".¹⁵⁰ In August, Večernje novosti published an article on its website concerning the testimony of a witness against Slobodan Milošević in relation to the Račak massacre: "It is almost as if that testimony, with its complete fabrications, best demonstrates the scale of the lies told in the Hague courtrooms and the extent to which the truth about Račak has been concealed for years, while the myth of an alleged crime committed by Serbian forces continues to be promoted".¹⁵¹

Following Pavković's death, the online portal Republika published an article explaining in detail how the Hague Tribunal "poisons the Serbs", quoting Biljana Plavšić, former President of Republika Srpska and a convicted war criminal, who stated that the Hague Tribunal had been "conceived and created to be a hell for Serbs who find themselves there".¹⁵²

In Saša Borojević's programme Conspiracy Theories on B92 television, Jugoslav Petrušić, one of the prominent Srebrenica genocide deniers and a conspiracy theorist, attributed responsibility for crimes committed during the siege of Sarajevo, including the two Markale market massacres and the Vase Miskin Street massacre, as well as the Tuzla Gate crime, to French and Dutch military officers.¹⁵³ In May, the tabloid Kurir criticised a judgment by a court in Bosnia and Herzegovina convicting Vojin Pavlović, president of the association Eastern Alternative, for denying the genocide in Srebrenica and displaying a banner bearing the image of Ratko Mladić.¹⁵⁴ The article described the judgment as "a warning to all those who publicly express the Serbian view of the past".¹⁵⁵

149 Ibid.

150 "Novo Jutro – Dea i Sarapa – prof. dr U. Šuvaković, P. Azdejković, V. Kokanović – 09.06.2025", TV Pink, YouTube video, 9 June 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G3kMnESHtN8>

151 "Video sam kako mu čupaju srce' Ovako su Albanci lagali o Račku, Milošević nije mogao da veruje šta sluša", Novosti, 20 August 2025, <https://www.novosti.rs/vesti/politika/1519652/video-sam-kako-cupaju-srce-ovako-albanci-lagali-racku-milosevic-nije-mogao-veruje-sta-slusa>

152 Jovana Branković, "Evo kako truju Srbe u zatvoru u Hagu! Skoro svi dobili teške bolesti i umirali u najgorim mukama, potresna i šokantna svedočenja haške torture!", Republika, 21 October 2025, <https://www.republika.rs/vesti/politika/703219/trovanje-srba-u-hagu-svedocenja-zatvorenika>

153 "Metak kao poruka", Saša Borojević, 16 June 2025, YouTube video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DiS-uc7Y3lw>

154 Luka Petković Majer, "Zbog rođendanske čestitke osuđen na dve i po godine zatvora! Čist primer progona Srba u BiH: Ne plašim ih se!", Kurir, 29 May 2025, <https://www.kurir.rs/vesti/drustvo/9683821/vojin-pavlovic-osudjen-u-bosni-i-hercegovini>

155 Ibid.

The Aesthetics of Denial

Hate graffiti, murals depicting war criminals, hooligan iconography, and the broadcasting of chauvinistic slogans and songs at public gatherings and events form the broader audio-visual framework through which the 1990s war crimes denial is expressed in Serbia.

Despite previous warnings issued to the Serbian authorities, including those contained in the 2024 report of the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, calling for the removal of graffiti and murals glorifying war criminals and spreading hatred through the denial of serious human rights violations, 2025 saw the continuation of the degradation of public space through hate graffiti and murals dedicated to convicted war criminals. As the year was marked by civic protests led by students participating in university blockades, public space was further saturated with threatening and derogatory messages, most often directed against protesting students, university professors, including the Rector of the University of Belgrade, Vladan Đokić, and Tonino Picula, the European Parliament's Rapporteur for Serbia.

Following a complaint submitted by YIHR on 19 March 2025, the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality issued a recommendation on 24 March calling on the Ćuprija Cultural Centre to immediately suspend both the competition and the planned creation of a mural dedicated to convicted war criminal Nebojša Pavković. In its recommendation, issued pursuant to Article 33(9) of the Anti-Discrimination Act, the Commissioner stated that the implementation of the competition could encourage hatred and discrimination against members of the Albanian community in Serbia. The Commissioner further concluded that such a project could lead to the secondary victimisation of victims and their families, while also undermining interethnic and inter-community relations in the country.¹⁵⁶

In its decision on the complaint, the Commissioner emphasised that creating a mural dedicated to a person convicted of serious crimes under international law and serving a lengthy prison sentence was inconsistent with the purpose and mission of cultural institutions. In a letter dated 1 April 2025, the Commissioner informed YIHR that the competition for the creation of a mural of Nebojša Pavković had been cancelled and that the Ćuprija Cultural Centre had suspended the related public procurement procedure. In this way, murals dedicated to war criminals were formally recognised as a form of hate speech and an act of discrimination.

¹⁵⁶ YIHR, Commissioner for Protection of Equality Recommends Immediate Suspension of the Competition and Creation of Mural of Nebojša Pavković in Ćuprija, 16 April 2025: <https://yihhr.rs/en/commissioner-for-protection-of-equality-recommends-immediate-suspension-of-the-competition-and-creation-of-mural-of-nebojsa-pavkovic-in-cuprija/>

However, one month after Pavković's death, and in the context of his glorification by state officials, unknown individuals painted a mural of him in Aleksinac on 18 November 2025. During 2025, a mural dedicated to Vladimir Lazarević, convicted of crimes against humanity, which was painted in April 2024, also remained in place.

A graffiti message reading "Only one genocide on Balkans was against the Serbs", accompanied by homophobic messages directed at President Vučić and several stencils depicting Ratko Mladić, in Knez Mihailova Street, one of the busiest areas of Belgrade, were not removed by city authorities throughout 2025. For this reason, on the eve of the 30th anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide, citizens removed the graffiti and restored the wall to its original condition. However, on 11 July 2025, just one hundred metres from that location, the Serbian Radical Party organised a public gathering at which copies of war criminal Vojislav Šešelj's book *There Was No Genocide in Srebrenica* were distributed. During the event, several participants painted a new graffiti message repeating the title of Šešelj's book, accompanied by the Serbian cross with four firesteels and the initials of the SRS. The following day, on 12 July, the citizens of Belgrade removed this graffiti as well, while municipal authorities and the public prosecutor's office failed to react to the conduct of SRS members. On the anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide, members of the group People's Patrols pasted posters bearing the message "Only one genocide on the Balkans was against the Serbs" on the entrance door of the YIHR's office. Following a citizens' initiative to remove another hate graffiti reading "When the Army Returns to Kosovo..." near Branko's Bridge in Belgrade, members of People's Patrols removed the genocide-denial graffiti at the beginning of Knez Mihailova Street on 31 December 2025. By the time this report was finalised, Belgrade's municipal authorities had still not removed it.

On 13 November, Vojislav Šešelj stated on Informer TV that he was "convinced that Zoran Đinđić Boulevard will one day bear the name of Ratko Mladić". In that same street, a large mural reading "Ratko Mladić Boulevard" remains painted on the exterior wall of a building, recalling the 2007 campaign during which the street was covered with posters carrying the same message. That action was led by the then Secretary-General of the Serbian Radical Party, Aleksandar Vučić. Throughout 2025, the mural remained in place despite glorifying a person convicted of crimes against humanity and genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Graffiti and murals bearing the message "When the Army Returns to Kosovo" remain widespread in public spaces across Serbia. In addition to their explicit militaristic message, these graffiti and murals deny the mass war crimes committed by the Yugoslav Army and Serbian police forces against Kosovo Albanians in 1998 and 1999. Despite judgments issued by both international and domestic courts, these crimes continue to be actively denied by the Serbian authorities.

On 23 September, civil engineer Danijel Dašić claimed that the State Audit Institution (SAI) had allegedly established that the Ministry of Construction had paid EUR 217,000, at the request of the Serbian Progressive Party, for the painting of murals bearing the slogan "When the Army Returns to Kosovo". However, this information could not be found in any publicly available SAI reports. On the same day, the institution denied Dašić's allegations. In response to the reports, the hooligan group Delije Sever issued a

statement claiming responsibility for most of the graffiti and stating that they had financed them themselves. They added that the first such graffiti had been painted by Partizan supporters and that this, as they described it, was a “Serbian” cause that transcended all other divisions. According to Delije Sever, the words of the folk song are intended to “boost the national spirit and strengthen belief in liberation”.

Citizens and activists who removed graffiti were frequently targeted by extremists, received threats, and were subjected to organised harassment campaigns on social media. Some were directly warned by hooligans not to touch the graffiti. In all such cases, the authorities failed to respond. During 2024 and 2025, a series of misdemeanour proceedings were brought against activists from the KROKODIL Association and YIHR for removing graffiti bearing the same message from a public building in Belgrade. These proceedings ultimately confirmed that cleaning public spaces cannot be characterised as a public order offence.

Following Nebojša Pavković’s arrival in Serbia for medical treatment, the tabloid *Informer* reported in late September that more than 200 LED billboards had been displayed across the country carrying the message: “Welcome, General! - The Knights of Košare”. A banner bearing the same message was displayed by members of the Delije Sever hooligan group during the football match between Red Star FC and Radnički Kragujevac FC on 28 September. After Pavković died on 20 October, chants praising him as a celebrated general were heard at basketball games involving Red Star and Partizan, the country’s two largest sports clubs. Large banners glorifying Pavković as a great general were also displayed by certain hooligan groups during these matches.

Examples of Institutional Denial

Date	Statement or act	Institution's representative	Crime denied	Type of denial
14 January 2025	"This showed that there had been no crime against civilians, but rather a confrontation and a counter-terrorist operation in a village where the headquarters of a terrorist brigade was located. Not even the Hague Tribunal was able to dispute or falsify the truth."	Milovan Drecun, President of the National Assembly Committee on Defence and Internal Affairs	Račak massacre	Literal denial
17 February 2025	"The secessionist movement in Kosovo and Metohija has brought suffering, hatred, displacement, regression and chronic instability to our region. Many Albanians, Serbs and members of other communities living in Kosovo and Metohija have suffered because of the idea of the so-called 'independent Kosovo'."	Government's Office for Kosovo and Metohija	War crimes against the Albanian population in Kosovo	Implicatory denial
18 February 2025	"It is to recognise Kosovo as a separate state, to acknowledge that genocide was committed in Srebrenica and that we are a genocidal people, to acknowledge and accept that Republika Srpska should not exist, and ultimately to accept that Vojvodina is not Serbia. That is their political agenda. And that is something we are fighting against."	Nikola Selaković, Minister of Culture	Srebrenica genocide	Interpretative denial

Date	Statement or act	Institution's representative	Crime denied	Type of denial
25 March 2025	<p>“And then they found what they considered a sufficient reason, as they always do, a single incident which we believe was a counter-terrorist operation against well-armed terrorists in Kosovo. They claimed that those 50 or 52 people were civilians and used that as the justification for their final decision against Serbia, after which they began bombing Serbia, Novi Sad, Belgrade, our positions in Kosovo and targets throughout the country.”</p>	<p>Aleksandar Vučić, President of Serbia</p>	<p>Račak massacre</p>	<p>Literal denial</p>
26 March 2025	<p>“The Serbian people have always stood on the side of freedom, and we have always paid a high price for it. We are a people who rose up against occupiers and never fought wars of conquest. Today, some are trying to take that truth away from us by portraying the victim and the liberator as the aggressor, and the aggressor as the victim.”</p>	<p>Đorđe Milićević, Minister without Portfolio responsible for coordinating activities and measures in the field of relations with the diaspora</p>	<p>War crimes in general</p>	<p>Literal denial</p>

Date	Statement or act	Institution's representative	Crime denied	Type of denial
11 July 2025	"It is absolutely not genocide, which does not mean that it was not a horrific war crime. Genocide is what happened to the Serbs in the NDH during the Second World War."	Ana Brnabić, President of the National Assembly of Serbia	Srebrenica genocide	Interpretative denial / Implicatory denial
30 August 2025	Milica Đurđević Stamenkovski posed for a photograph with the flag of the 549 th Motorised Brigade	Milica Đurđević Stamenkovski, Minister of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Policy	War crimes against the Albanian population in Kosovo	Literal denial
16 September 2025	Demo Beriša attending the "Great Serbian People's Celebration" organised by Vojislav Šešelj and the SRS in Hrtkovci.	Demo Beriša, Minister for Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue	Crimes against humanity against Croats in Hrtkovci	Literal denial
17 October 2025	"The KLA's struggle against fascism was and will forever remain pure."	Šaip Kamberi, Member of Parliament	War crimes of the KLA in Kosovo	Literal denial
22 October 2025	Convicted war criminal Nebojša Pavković buried with full military honours in the Alley of Distinguished Citizens at Belgrade's New Cemetery.	Government of Serbia	War crimes against the Albanian population in Kosovo	Literal denial

Examples of Non-Institutional Denial

Date	Statement or act	Proponent of denial	War crime denied	Type of denial
14 June 2025	"Among the blockaders, we can often find people who openly promote on social media the narrative that genocide occurred in Srebrenica and who constantly try to attach that criminal, genocidal label to the Serbian people."	Milana Vuković, Centre for Social Stability	Srebrenica genocide	Interpretative denial
19 June 2025	Telegram sent to Radovan Karadžić containing the message: "With faith and hope that justice will finally prevail and that we will celebrate your future birthdays together."	Serbian Literary Cooperative	Srebrenica genocide	Interpretative denial
11 June 2025	Vojislav Šešelj promoting his book <i>There Was No Genocide in Srebrenica</i> in Knez Mihailova Street in central Belgrade on the anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide.	Vojislav Šešelj, convicted war criminal and SRS president	Srebrenica genocide	Interpretative denial
28 September 2025	"The moment someone says anything against Nebojša Pavković, you know they are the worst kind of scum, the worst kind of anti-Serb."	Dragan Vučićević, owner and editor-in-chief of the tabloid <i>Informer</i>	War crimes against the Albanian population in Kosovo	Literal denial

Date	Statement or act	Proponent of denial	War crime denied	Type of denial
29 September 2025	Vladimir Lazarević on Nebojša Pavković's return to Serbia: "General Pavković has spent more than twenty years imprisoned despite his innocence (...) That is the usual practice of the so-called Hague Tribunal. They seek not only admissions of guilt, but plea bargains. As part of those bargains, they demand admissions of alleged crimes committed during the defence of our country."	Vladimir Lazarević, convicted war criminal	War crimes against the Albanian population in Kosovo	Literal denial
22 October 2025	Bishop Dositej delivering a speech at the funeral of Nebojša Pavković: "When the days of trial came, when justice was hidden behind the interests of the powerful, he, like many before him, became a symbol of those unjustly convicted."	Serbian Orthodox Church	War crimes against the Albanian population in Kosovo	Literal denial
3 December 2025	Screening of the film Republika Srpska: The Struggle for Freedom by Boris Malagurski at the Faculty of Political Sciences.	Faculty of Political Sciences, students' organisation Serbian Political Forum	War crimes in Bosnia and Herzegovina	Implicatory denial

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