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Sanctions for Genocide Denial

Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia

Belgrade, July 11, 2012. This year marks the 17th anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide. As years go by, new evidence of this horrible crime accumulate. Many sentences either for or closely related to the Srebrenica have been passed in ICTY. On the grounds of these sentences the International Court of Justice decided that genocide had been committed in Srebrenica. An interim sentence imposed on Slobodan Milosevic in ICTY also indicates his responsibility and thus the responsibility of Serbia for this crime.

Despite of all, today's Serbia witnesses another wave of denial of the Srebrenica genocide. "There was no genocide in Serbia," claimed newly elected President of Serbia Tomislav Nikolic. The European Commission strongly responded to his statement – a "red line" no Serbia's official should cross.

Not long ago, the Pecat weekly published the book "Srebrenica: A Historical Forgery." Its copies were largely distributed throughout Serbia and Republika Srpska. When distribution was banned in the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the book's editor, Stefan Karganovic, turned to the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia claiming violation of his right to "free expression."

The fact that there are more and more claims as such or similar to it in Serbia indicates that a number of sentences passed in ICTY are being ignored. An ongoing campaign argues that "the myth of Srebrenica, created by Muslims and the West, destabilizes Serbia and prevents a dialogue between Serbs and Muslims."

Republika Srpska's attempt at preventing Bosniaks from getting registered for local elections in Srebrenica, also testifies of the strategy for cementing the town's demographic structure that emerged from genocide.

Almost on daily basis, the media in Serbia are naming the war in Bosnia "a Serbs' liberation war" and Bosniaks responsible for it. In the book "The War in Bosnia" published on the eve of the elections of May 2012, the author, Dobrica Cosic, argues, "Muslims declared war on Serbs planning to occupy the entire territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina and eliminate Serbs from a first Muslim republic in Europe."

The 1990s and their interpretation war the main stumbling blocs in the way of normalization of the relations between Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. The legacy of

the Milosevic regime is still Serbia's cross. Democratic players, emerging after Milosevic's ouster, have not managed to reach a minimal consensus on unbiased interpretation of the recent past and the way to overcome it. Republika Srpska is not only Belgrade's booty – it is also a hostage to the crime orchestrated by Belgrade.

The Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia demands the state of Serbia to take a moral stand against any denial of genocide and demands the newly elected parliament to pass a law against such denials.

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