

RS Government Special Session A Distasteful Attempt to Question Genocide



The RS Government's conclusions of 19 April are a despicable attempt to question that genocide took place in Srebrenica in July 1995 by deliberately distorting established historical and legal facts, and propagating misinformation and disinformation with the intent to obscure the truth.

Although there have always been recidivist extremists who would try to deny genocide, nothing can change the facts of what happened in Srebrenica in July 1995. The conclusions of the current SNSD-led RS Government discredit the RS both at home and abroad. They demonstrate a gratuitous and callous disregard for the catastrophic impact of the Srebrenica events on the lives of the surviving family members, and for the obligations under the European Convention and the Genocide Convention, as well as responsibilities under Annex 7 of the Dayton Peace Agreement and the process of tracing persons still unaccounted for.

Acknowledging and coming to terms with the fact of the genocide is essential for the health of any society, particularly one in whose name these crimes were committed. It is therefore important to highlight that:

- By now casting doubts over the results of the RS Srebrenica Commission's report, the RS Government is returning the RS to a position where it is not in compliance with a binding decision of the Human Rights Chamber, a Dayton institution;

· By dismissing decisions and findings of fact by both the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) that what took place in Srebrenica in July 1995 was genocide; the RS is again rejecting the rule of law. The ICTY Trial Chamber has stated that the Srebrenica crimes defy description in their horror and noted the implications for humankind's capacity to revert to acts of brutality under the stresses of conflict.

· By claiming that the number of victims was inflated by burying family members at the Srebrenica-Potocari is propagating disinformation, as the facts clearly indicate otherwise. The board of the Memorial made some 50 exceptions to the rule that only genocide victims are buried in Potocari, citing compelling humanitarian reasons such as allowing children and parents to be buried with each other. Although justified, the board has stopped making such exceptions for some years now. These decisions are well documented, and these individuals are not included in the report as victims of the Srebrenica genocide.

· By refusing to appoint a representative to the Srebrenica-Potocari Memorial Foundation, the RS has deliberately foregone the opportunity to participate in the Foundation's decision-making and efforts to advance reconciliation in BiH.

· By referring to an alleged list of some 35,000 persons who were ethnically cleansed in parallel to the killing operations, the RS Government somehow refutes the fact that the remains of 6,414 victims have already been conclusively identified while more remains found in mass graves await identification is both preposterous and offensive.

There can be no political, legal, or moral justification for the 19 April conclusions of the RS Government on Srebrenica questioning genocide. The RS Government should reconsider its

conclusions and align itself with the facts and legal requirements and act accordingly, rather than inflicting emotional distress on the survivors, torture history, and denigrate the public image of the country.