



INSTITUTE FOR THE RESEARCH OF GENOCIDE
CANADA

Stop Genocide Denial

31 MAY – WHITE ARMBAND DAY WORLDWIDE

On 31 May 1992, the Bosnian Serb authorities in Prijedor, a town in north western Bosnia and Herzegovina, issued a decree for all non-Serbs to mark their houses with white flags or sheets and to wear a white armband if they were to leave their houses. This was the first day of a campaign of extermination that resulted in executions, concentration camps, mass rapes and the ultimate removal of more than 94% of Bosnian Muslims and Bosnian Croats from the territory of the Prijedor municipality.

This was the first time since the 1939 Nazi decree for Polish Jews to wear white armbands with the blue Star of David that members of an ethnic or religious group were to be marked for extermination in this way.

Members of the European Commission Monitoring Mission testified that while visiting a mixed Serb/Muslim village as late as August 1992 they saw that the Muslim houses were marked with white flags in order to distinguish them from the Serb houses. The campaign of persecution of non-Serbs that ensued was judged by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia to amount to actus reus of genocide.

Thousands of people were killed, detained, tortured, deported or raped and the community that was known as Prijedor was changed forever.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is today a country that functions on the basis of a peace agreement signed in 1995 which left Prijedor in the hands of Bosnian Serbs.

Victims of the genocidal campaign carried out in Prijedor have not received any acknowledgement of their suffering from the municipal authorities to this day. The mayor Marko Pavic and the local government refuse to publicly acknowledge any of the crimes committed in Prijedor, despite numerous judgments of international and local courts. Memorials honoring victims of this campaign have been forbidden and access to sites of their suffering denied by the likes of ArcelorMittal, a company that now owns the site of the former concentration camp in Omarska.

We invite you to show your solidarity with victims of mass atrocities committed in Prijedor and around the world on 31 May by wearing a white armband or placing a white sheet or flag on your window.



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This action is intended to raise awareness of the struggle for acknowledgement of millions who suffered injustice and harm. From Prijedor to Johannesburg, from Jakarta to Lima, let's make this a day to raise our voices against the denial of truth about past atrocities. On 31 May, let's be the voices of countless victims who were targeted for their race, ethnicity or political beliefs.

Wear a white armband, place a white sheet on your window on 31 May! Let the victims in Prijedor and around the world know they are not alone.

Send in your [comments](#) and share stories of victims being denied their right to truth and remembrance.

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