**Appeal to Members of the EU Parliament, the Council of Europe, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights in Vienna, American Congress and Senate an Canadian Parlimanet**

Urgent Appeal to Members of the EU Parliament, the Council of Europe, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, American Congress and Senate and Canadian Parliament:

Stop the ban on Bosniak rallies in Serb-administered Prijedor (North-west Bosnia)!

We have been appalled to learn of the banning of a peaceful protest demonstration organised by Bosniaks in Prijedor, in the Serb administered part of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is scandalous that in the heart of Europe the Republika Srpska authorities are being allowed to create an apartheid system and intimidate the survivors of genocide in Bosnia. As our human rights organisation was informed today, the "Izvor" association in Prijedor and seven other NGOs were planning to hold a rally on International Human Rights Day (10 December) to draw attention to the persistent discrimination against non-Serbs in Republika Srpska, including the criminal prosecution of individuals who have called for their rights to be respected. Although the rally was registered with the authorities, it was banned at short notice without any reason being given. According to Izvor's press spokesperson Edin Ramulic, this is not the first time that the police in Prijedor have prevented non-Serbs from exercising their right of peaceful assembly and stopped them organising peaceful events. "However members of Serb organisations like the "Ravna Gora Chetniks" are allowed to parade through Prijedor wearing their intimidating black uniforms."

On 23 May 2012 the authorities banned a ceremony in honour of the memory of 266 women and young girls murdered in the municipality of Prijedor during the Bosnian War. Memories are still fresh of the terrible crimes that were committed in 1992 in the Omarska, Keraterm and Trnopolje concentration camps and at the Koricanske Stijene cliffs, in all of which police officers from Prijedor played a significant role. We are writing to you today to urge you to bring pressure to bear on the government of Republika Srpska in order to put an end to their official policy of ethnic discrimination and apartheid.

In 1992, at the start of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, police officers under the direction of Prijedor's Municipal Crisis Staff Committee, the members of which included the local chief of police Simo Drljaca, served as guards, torturers and executioners in the concentration camps. More than 800 prisoners were murdered in Omarska and Keraterm alone. Police officers shot 200 innocent civilians at Koricanske Stijene. 21 of the 28 Prijedor cases tried to date by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia have involved members of the police. Nine police

officers must still stand trial. 56,000 Bosniaks and Croats made up approximately half the population of the municipality of Prijedor. 3173 were murdered, most of them during the first year of the war. Some 53,000 were expelled and scattered around the world. To date 8000 to 10,000 of the expulsees have returned home to the

greater Prijedor area.

We call on you to do everything in your power to compel the Serb authorities in Prijedor to respect the civil and human rights of non-Serb returnees.

We would greatly appreciate it if you would keep us informed of whatever steps you take to achieve this.

Sincerely Yours

**Tilman Zülch**

General Secretary, Society for Threatened Peoples

 **Milada Hodžić**

"Izvor" Women's Association, Prijedor (on behalf of seven other NGOs from Prijedor)

**Emir Ramić**

Institute for Research of Genocide Canada

**Haris Alibašić**

Congress of North American Bosniaks

**Sanja Drnovšek**

Bosnian American Genocide Institute and Education Center