



INSTITUTE FOR THE RESEARCH OF GENOCIDE  
CANADA

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Members of the House of Commons of Canada

Subject: Petition e-1837 (Crimes Against Humanity)

January 24, 2019

Dear Members,

We would like to thank you for your support of Canada's Bosnian community. At the same time, we would like to take this opportunity to express our respect to you personally, and to other Canadian institutions as well. Today is the deadline for Petition e-1837, which is addressed to the government of Canada. This petition was initiated by Dr. Emir Ramic, the Director of the Institute for Research of Genocide Canada (IGC) in the hope that, as a result, the Canadian government would enact legislation to prohibit Srebrenica Genocide denial in Canada.

The events that occurred in Bosnia and Herzegovina from 1992 to 1995 were not a result of civil war, but rather an attempt by its neighbouring states to violate the territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The recently pronounced verdicts of the Hague Tribunal on the Bosnian War and Genocide, and on the Joint Criminal Activity involved, confirm this. With this in mind, and in considering the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina, we must ask an important question: Will Canada put its seal on truth and justice in accordance with international law?

Our actions can never bring back those who were killed in this war, nor can we eradicate all of the suffering resulting from genocide, brutal ethnic cleansing, the siege of civilian populations and the existence of concentration camps and rape houses, all of which occurred in the heart of Europe and during a time of global peace. However, we can certainly do everything possible to enable the criminal sanctioning of those responsible for the atrocities that occurred during the Bosnian War and Genocide (including the Srebrenica Genocide), as well as those who deny that genocide took place. This is what the IGC, with its international team of experts (including many prominent members of Canadian society) had in mind in conceiving this petition.



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The Canadian Parliament adopted two resolutions recognizing the Srebrenica Genocide. Over 30 state parliaments from all over the world have also adopted final resolutions acknowledging this as well. And the final verdicts of the international courts in The Hague recognize that genocide occurred in Srebrenica in July of 1995. All of this provides a solid legal basis for the criminal sanctioning of those who deny the Srebrenica Genocide.

Canada has done a great deal to show its support to Bosnia, as well as to Bosnian Canadians. A permanent exhibition of the Srebrenica Genocide is on display at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights in Winnipeg. A memorial of the Srebrenica Genocide was unveiled in Windsor in 2014 (the first of its kind outside of Bosnia). The Srebrenica Flower (an emblem of this genocide) has been distributed to all of the members of the Canadian parliament. Students in Canadian schools have a chance to learn about this genocide through official curriculum. All of these elements combined create a moral basis for the enactment of this legislation.

The act of denying the Srebrenica Genocide causes additional pain and suffering to those who have lived through the Bosnian War, in addition to insulting the memory of those who were killed. With this in mind, one must remember that over 50,000 Canadians are of Bosnian descent. A good portion of this population includes individuals who have survived the Bosnian War and Genocide (including the Srebrenica Genocide) and their offspring. These people fled their homes in order to survive and have made Canada their home. Many of them have become successful, productive and law-abiding citizens. It means a great deal to them to know that Canada stands by their side and recognizes what they have been through.

It is also important to penalize any attempt to deny the Srebrenica Genocide, since denial is the first step towards a new genocide. According to experts in the field of genocide studies, the important link after every committed genocide is its denial. The most common motives behind the denial of the Srebrenica Genocide are ideology and politics. This includes the concerted efforts of individuals, organizations, and in some cases the state of Serbia, to free themselves from any responsibility associated with their own participation in genocide.

By accepting petition e-1837, Canada would be making a major contribution to raising awareness of genocide denial. This would be an important first step towards the prevention of a future genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The criminal sanctioning of the denial of the Srebrenica Genocide is not only an



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obligation for judicial decisions of international and national courts, but also a condition for the construction of an open and just society in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Any denial of the Srebrenica Genocide constitutes an unacceptable and impermissible threat to the peace, liberty and security of the citizens of this nation. Any attempts to rehabilitate ideas and ideologies justifying genocide and supporting its perpetrators would constitute new crimes that must be punishable.

With the assurance that we are on the same path of the protection of human rights, upholding the dignity of every human being and promoting the universal rights of the citizens of Canada, please receive our deepest respect.

Sincerely,

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