

Prije dvadeset četiri godine ove sedmice, srpske snage su izvršile genocid u malom gradu u srcu Evrope.

8.372 nevinih bošnjačkih muškaraca i dječaka je masakrirano i bačeno u masovne grobnice, dok je na desetine hiljada drugih muškaraca, žena i djece bošnjačkih nacionalnosti srpskom kampanjom protjerano. Generalni sekretar Ujedinjenih nacija je tada proglasio da je to najteži zločin počinjen na evropskom tlu od Drugog svjetskog rata. Međunarodni sud pravde i Međunarodni krivični sud za bivšu Jugoslaviju proglasili su djela koja su počinile srpske snage u Srebrenici genocidom. I bezbrojni istražitelji ljudskih prava i državne vlade takođe su potvrdili da je počinjen genocid nad muslimanskim civilima u Srebrenici u julu 1995. godine.

Pa ipak, I dan danas, 24 godine kasnije, još uvijek postoje oni koji negiraju genocid.

U Bosni, u Srbiji i ovde u Kanadi, ljudi ne samo da ne žele da priznaju ovaj genocid, već aktivno pokušavaju da prekroje istoriju. Oni ili poriču sistematsku prirodu ubijanja i krive pojedince, ili osporavaju ogromne količine DNK dokaza ili dovode u pitanje legitimnost same definicije genocida. Neki idu tako daleko da izrazavaju žaljenje što nas nisu "dokrajčili" jednom zauvijek u julu 1995. godine. Vlada Srbije nastavlja da negira genocid, što je navelo Evropski parlament krajem prošle godine da donese rezoluciju u kojoj kritikuje vladu Srbije zbog njenog nepriznavanja šta se dogodilo. Prije dva mjeseca glavni političar bosanskih Srba je Srebrenicu nazvao "izmišljenim mitom".

Sve češće poricanje genocida u Srebrenici bi trebalo da brine sve nas Kanađane. Poricanje genocida je ono što se naziva 8. faza genocida. Nacističke vlasti su demantovale ubijanje 6 miliona Jevreja tokom rata i dugo nakon toga. Fašisti u Evropi i dan danas poriču holokaust. Zašto? Zato što je to dio njihovih napora da se žrtve dehumanizuju. Zato što je to propaganda koja raspiruje nacionalističke osjećaje. Zato što je to revizija istorije koja legitimizira prošle i buduće zločina.

Američki doktorant na Univerzitetu Sirakuza nedavno je napisao članak u kojem objašnjava opasnost poricanja genocida u Srebrenici na ovaj način: „Ista de-humanizirajuća filozofija koja raspiruje etničke i vjerske mrznje koja je dovela do genocida je opet na snazi, možda jača nego ikad prije. Poricanje istorije i istine postalo je normalno u mnogim dijelovima svijeta, ponekad zamaskirano kroz pokušaje legitimacije. U ovom trenutku posebno je važno da se naučnici, novinari i drugi profesionalci bore za istinu i traže platformu koja će razotkriti laži i dezinformacije. Prekrajanje istorije ugrožava ne samo osjećaj pravde za porodice u Bosni, već i demokratski proces u regiji. Ako je Evropa zaista ozbiljna u pogledu zaštite demokratije i individualnih prava, ona mora prvo odgovoriti na napade na istinu.“

Iz ovih razloga, posebno je važno što je prije tri godine ovaj spomenik u Windsoru zvanično otvoren, prva službena komemoracija genocida u Srebrenici izvan Bosne. Gradonačelnik Dilkens je 11. jula proglasio i „Dan sećanja na Srebrenicu“, a prijedlog gospodina Brian Masea da prizna genocid u Srebrenici dobio je jednoglasnu suglasnost Parlamenta. To nisu samo simbolični koraci. Ne možemo spriječiti nepravde budućnosti ako ne priznajemo nepravde iz prošlosti. Ne možemo da poštujemo žrtve a da ne prepoznavamo istinu o onome što im se dogodilo. Sloboda izražavanja ne daje dozvolu za širenje laži, dehumanizaciju čitavih grupa ljudi ili podsticanje mržnje.

Dakle, danas stojimo ovde, za istinu o tome šta se dogodilo u Srebrenici. Stojimo ovdje u solidarnosti sa svim žrtvama genocida u sijeku. I mi se obavezujemo da ćemo učiniti sve što možemo da spriječimo genocid bilo gdje. Nikad više. Nikad više.

Twenty-four years ago this week, Serbian forces perpetrated a genocide in a small city in the heart of Europe. 8,372 innocent Bosniak men and boys were massacred and thrown in mass graves, while tens of thousands of other Bosniak men, women and children were driven from their homes in the Serbian campaign to cleanse the region of all Muslims. The Secretary-General of the United Nations at the time declared it to be the worst crime committed on European soil since WWII. The International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia declared the acts committed by Serbian forces in Srebrenica to be genocide. And countless human rights investigators and state governments have also confirmed that a genocide was perpetrated against Muslim civilians in Srebrenica in July 1995.

And yet, to this day, 24 years later, there are still those who deny a genocide took place. In Bosnia, in Serbia, and here in Canada, people are not just unwilling to acknowledge this genocide, but are actively trying to rewrite history. They either deny the systematic nature of the killing and blame belligerents, or they contest vast quantities of DNA evidence and question the legitimacy of the very definition of genocide. Some go as far as to express regret for not “finishing them off” once and for all in July 1995. The Serbian government continues to deny genocide, leading the European Parliament to issue a resolution late last year criticizing the Serbian government for its failure to acknowledge what happened. Two months ago the top Bosnian Serb politician called Srebrenica a “fabricated myth”.

The increasingly frequent denial of the Srebrenica genocide is something we should all be worried about as Canadians. Genocide denial is what’s called the 8th stage of genocide. Nazi authorities denied the killing of 6 million Jews both during the war and long afterward. Fascists in Europe to this day deny the Holocaust. Why? Because it is part of their effort to dehumanize the victims. Because it is propaganda that whips up nationalist sentiments. Because it is

revisionist history that legitimizes past and future crimes.

An American PhD student at Syracuse University recently wrote an article explaining the danger of denying the Srebrenica genocide this way: “The same de-humanizing philosophy which fed into ethnic and religious tropes leading to genocide is back, perhaps stronger than ever. The denial of history and the truth has become normalized in many parts of the world, sometimes through masked efforts at legitimacy. In this moment it is especially important for scholars, journalists, and other professionals to stand up for the truth and demand a platform which overshadows lies and misinformation. Historical modification threatens not just the sense of justice for families in Bosnia, but the democratic process in the region. If Europe is indeed serious about protecting democracy and individual rights, it needs to respond to attacks on the truth first.”

For these reasons, it is especially important that three years ago, this permanent monument in Windsor was officially opened, the first official commemoration of the Srebrenica genocide outside of Bosnia. Mayor Dilkens also declared July 11th “Srebrenica Remembrance Day”, and Mr. Brian Masse’s motion to recognize the Srebrenica Genocide received unanimous consent from Parliament. These are not just symbolic steps. We cannot prevent the wrongs of the future unless we acknowledge the wrongs of the past. We cannot honour the victims without recognizing the truth of what happened to them. Freedom of expression does not give license to spread lies, dehumanize whole groups of people or incite hatred.

So we stand here today for the truth of what happened at Srebrenica. We stand in solidarity with all victims of genocide everywhere. And we re-commit ourselves to do all that we can to prevent genocide anywhere.

Never again’ is the rallying cry for all those who believe that mankind must speak out against genocide. So I stand here in front of you all today to say Never again. Never Again.

Prof. Dr. Jasmina Kalajdzic