



INSTITUTE FOR THE RESEARCH OF GENOCIDE
CANADA

Office of the President
Judson University
1151 N State St.
Elgin, IL 60123
United States

April 11, 2026

Dear Dr. Crume,

The Institute for Research of Genocide Canada writes to express its grave concern regarding Judson University's decision to host Milorad Dodik, former president of Republika Srpska, as the keynote speaker at the 2026 World Leadership Forum, titled "Standing Up for Democracy." We are equally alarmed by the institution's plan to bestow upon Mr. Dodik the inaugural Leadership and Standing Up for Democracy Award. Mr. Dodik served as the eighth president of Republika Srpska from 2022 until his removal from office in 2025. During his tenure and throughout his political career, he has systematically undermined the very foundations of peace, stability, and the rule of law in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Western Balkans.

We raise particularly the following fundamental concerns:

1. Persistent Calls for Secession and Violation of the Dayton Peace Agreement

Mr. Dodik has repeatedly and publicly called for the secession of Republika Srpska from Bosnia and Herzegovina. These actions constitute a direct and flagrant violation of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina (the Dayton Peace Agreement), which preserves the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and political unity of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a single state. By championing dissolution and ethnic division, Mr. Dodik actively works to undo the hard-won peace that ended the 1992–1995 genocide and war. His actions have included threatening to secede the Republika Srpska entity, attacking Bosnia's state institutions, and fostering separatism at every turn.

2. Systematic Attacks on the Rule of Law and Western Sanctions

Mr. Dodik has consistently obstructed the authority of Bosnia and Herzegovina's state-level institutions, including its constitutional court, its presidency, and its judiciary. He has denied the Srebrenica genocide, glorified convicted war criminals, and used his office to advance a destabilizing, ethno-nationalist agenda that endangers the rights and security of all citizens, especially survivors of genocide and their descendants. Indeed, until recently, Mr. Dodik was primarily sanctioned by the United States and the United Kingdom for precisely these actions: destabilizing Bosnia and Herzegovina, undermining the 1995 Dayton Peace Accords, and engaging in widespread corruption.

3. Direct Contradiction to American Democratic Principles

Most troubling of all is the stark contradiction between Milorad Dodik's record and the democratic values that Judson University ought to uphold. The United States was founded upon the enduring principles of unalienable rights, a federal system designed to unite rather than divide, and the supremacy of a constitutional order that binds all constituent parts into a single, indivisible union. Within this tradition, democratic leadership is measured not by the capacity to



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CANADA

fracture political communities, but by a sustained commitment to preserving unity under the rule of law. Against this standard, Mr. Dodik's open advocacy of secession does not constitute a defence of democracy, but rather its antithesis: a politics of fragmentation, ethnic exclusivity, and the erosion of shared civic institutions.

Furthermore, the United States has long presented itself as a champion of accountability for atrocity crimes, the primacy of international law, and the protection of minority rights as cornerstones of democratic governance. It is therefore a profound contradiction that the state of Illinois would see Judson University host Milorad Dodik - widely recognized as one of the most prominent deniers of the Srebrenica genocide. Mr. Dodik's denial of the Srebrenica genocide - the gravest mass atrocity on European soil since the Holocaust - is not a marginal or inconsequential political position. It constitutes a direct assault on truth, on collective memory, and on the very foundations of justice.

4. Awarding a Genocide Denier and Apologist for Extremism

By granting this prize, Judson University is endorsing the work of a genocide denier who supports Serbian extremism aimed at creating a "Greater Serbia" at the expense of destroying the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Mr. Dodik is a genocide denier and a sympathizer of the Greater Serbian nationalist politics, ideology, and practices embodied by the indicted war criminal Slobodan Milošević. To give an award to such a figure represents an assault on truth, justice, the culture of memory, the United Nations and its international tribunals and legal order. Most unforgivably, this award strikes directly at the victims - not only of the Srebrenica genocide but also of all the terrible crimes in human history, including the victims of the Holocaust. To honour a man who denies genocide, champions secession, attacks the rule of law, and sympathizes with convicted war criminals sends a chilling message that those who dismantle democratic institutions, threaten peace, deny genocide, and engage in corruption may be celebrated rather than condemned.

In conclusion, by granting Mr. Dodik a platform and an award named in defence of democracy, Judson University is lending moral legitimacy to a figure who has recently been sanctioned by the United States and other Western nations precisely for his anti-democratic, destabilizing actions. This decision confuses regional and international observers, deeply wounds the victims of the Bosnian genocide, and mocks the very principles of rule of law, unity, and human dignity that American democracy purports to defend.

We respectfully urge you to reconsider Mr. Dodik's appearance, review the decision to present this award, and reflect on whether the forum's mission aligns with genuine democratic leadership.

We look forward to your response and to your engagement on this matter.

Respectfully,

Dr. Emir Ramić
Director of the Institute for the Research of Genocide Canada