



The Honorable Vice President Joe Biden  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. Vice President:

The Bosnian-American Genocide Institute and Education Center; Bosnian American Cultural Association; Brotherhood of Bosniak Genocide Survivors; Kozarac Association; Srebrenica Association; Bosnian Library, Chicago; BiH Club; Organization of Sarajevan's in Chicago; Bosna TV, Radio "Our Word" in Chicago; Chicagoraja; United Bosnia; and Professor Dr. David Pettigrew with all Bosnian-Americans under these organizations, as well as all that signed the attached petition are requesting that the United States of America withdraw its permission for Mr. Branko Pecanac, General Consul of Bosnia and Herzegovina and for Mr. Nebojsa Acimovic, General Consul of Serbia to perform their duties in Chicago insofar as they have abused their positions by identifying with extreme Serbian ultra-nationalist forces in their presentations celebrating January 9<sup>th</sup>, - Serb Republic Day in Chicago, 2014.

The January 9th commemoration directly discriminated against all other peoples (non-Serbs) who live in the entity of the Serb Republic [Republika Srpska], within Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as its citizens in the United States of America. This was as well an unlawful interference in the internal relations in Bosnia and Herzegovina by Serbia proper.

The gathering, which was videotaped, was attended by: Father Darko Spasojevic, Cathedral of the Resurrection of Christ and other religious dignitaries of the Orthodox Church, Mr. Nebojsa Acimovic, General Consul of Serbia in Chicago, Mrs. Danijela Sremac, Director of the Serbian Institute in Washington, Mr. Slavko Panovic, President of Serbian National Defense Council of Chicago, Mr. Marinko Avramovic, Counselor to the Ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and, Mr. Brane Pecanac, General Consul of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Chicago

In the video, the General Consul of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Chicago and the General Consul of Serbia in Chicago, can clearly be seen expressing their support and gratitude for convicted war criminals, as well as those who are currently on trial at the tribunal, thereby glorifying the genocide committed against Bosniaks and other non-Serbs. We understand and fully support freedom of speech, but it would be expected that Mr. Pecanac, as an official diplomatic representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and thus also the putative representative of Bosniaks and non-Serbs, would be culturally sensitive to, and represent all the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina in his official capacity. Mr. Acimovic, as an official representative of Serbia, should not interfere in the internal relations of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and should not support war criminals.

It is very clear that the motives and goals of the organizers and participants were opposed to the provisions of the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina and its civil and political authorities,

the provisions of the Dayton agreement, international law, and the decisions of international courts relating to war crimes committed in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the 1992-1995 aggression. In addition, it is clear that the organizers and participants were opposed to the official policy of the United States in relation to the aggression in Bosnia-Herzegovina and genocide against Bosniaks and non-Serbs. The motives and goals of the meeting on January 9th insulted the victims of the aggression against Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1992-1995.

Bosnian-Herzegovinian organizations and Bosnian American citizens therefore feel obligated to respond to the inappropriate behavior of representatives of the states of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia. These representatives identified themselves as providing clear support for perpetrators of genocide and ethnic cleansing, glorified convicted war criminals, as well as the participants in such atrocities. Moreover, Mr. Pecanac declared that he himself participated in the aggression against Bosniaks and non-Serbs.

Participants at the gathering have publicly confirmed that the quest for a Greater Serbia is still current even though it was militarily defeated during World War II. The ideology of a Greater Serbia promoted the political program of the Chetnik movement of Draza Mihailovic and the exiled government in London and their allies, during the aggression on Bosnia and Herzegovina 1992-1995, when the Milosevic-Tudjman plan to divide Bosnia and Herzegovina and create of "Greater Serbia" and "Greater Croatia" failed primarily due to the resistance of the citizens of a multicultural, multinational, and multiethnic Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The participants in the abovementioned gathering marked January 9, 2014 as the 22<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the Serb Republic [Republika Srpska], commemorating the very day when the violation of the constitutional and legal system of Bosnia and Herzegovina began, when the self-proclaimed Assembly of the Serbian People in Bosnia and Herzegovina was formed, and when they adopted a declaration on the proclamation of the "Serb Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina," a declaration that launched nothing less than the aggression, ethnic cleansing and genocide against all non-Serb residents of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in the final judgments in the "Krstic case" in 2005, and the verdict of the International Court of Justice in The Hague from February 26, 2007, confirmed that the military and police institutions of the Serb Republic [Republika Srpska] committed genocide and that the State of Serbia failed to prevent genocide. These judgments give legitimate rights to the victims and witnesses of aggression and genocide, in truth and justice.

Many Bosnian Associations recognize January 9<sup>th</sup> as the beginning of the aggression on Bosnia and Herzegovina and the genocide against Bosniaks. By the decisions of international courts 161 people (110 Serbs, 34 Croats, 9 Bosniaks, 7 Macedonians and 1 Albanian) have been convicted for war crimes, which itself speaks volumes about the character of war and the war crimes against humanity and international law on the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The General Consul of Serbia [Serbia proper], Mr. Acimovic, at this meeting stated that the Serb Republic [Republika Srpska] is a *state*, an assertion that constitutes a violation of the Dayton Peace Agreement and the existing Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, according to which

the Serb Republic is only an entity within the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The General Consul of Serbia openly offered the support of the Serbian consulate to all Bosnian Serbs who are citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In his speech he stated that there is “no border” between Serbia and Republika Srpska, thereby ignoring the sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina and encouraging ethnic intolerance. By “annexing” Republika Srpska in his speech the General Consul invoked the ultranationalist goal of a “Greater Serbia.”

The director of the Serbian Institute in Washington, Mrs. Danijela Sremac, for her part, glorified the role of former general Ratko Mladic and former Serb Republic President Radovan Karadzic, drawing the applause and admiration for their "national heroes," which, according to the attendees are being unfairly prosecuted at The Hague for committing genocide and other crimes against humanity and international law. This open revisionism and denial of genocide and other serious war crimes is an open challenge not only to the rulings of international courts, but also to the policy within the United States, where these organizations exist and where their representatives live and work.

Let us mention that the Resolutions commemorating the Srebrenica Genocide and recognizing the Bosnian Serbs as perpetrators of the genocide against Bosniaks, have been approved at national as well as state levels within the United States.

The Bosnian Herzegovinian organizations in Chicago protest especially the presentations of our official state representatives, Mr. Brane Pecanac, General Consul of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Chicago and Mr. Marinko Avramovic, Counselor to the Ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mrs. Jadranka Negodic, in whose name he spoke.

Mr. Avramovic, an the official representative of the Embassy of Bosnia and Herzegovina and all its peoples, celebrated January 9, 2014 as the "22 birthday of our homeland." As Consul General of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Chicago, in his address to the guests, Mr. Pecanac said, “Amongst you I see my friends, my war comrades, who together with me created the Serb Republic [Republika Srpska]. It is my honor that I have lived and fought for creating the Serb Republic with the Serbian people, the Serbian army and Serbian police.” Mr. Pecanac identified himself exclusively with the extremists amongst the Serbian people and the Serb Republic, which is only an entity of the nation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which he should be representing. Thus he discriminated against all non-Serbian citizens living in Bosnia and Herzegovina. With his actions he insulted and intimidated all nonSerb citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as Bosnian Americans.

It is politically inappropriate and morally indecent that the General Consul of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr. Brane Pecanac, a Bosnian Serb ultranationalist, should continue to serve as an official representative of the long suffering people of Bosnian and Herzegovina and their government in the United States. It is politically inappropriate and morally indecent that the General Consul of Serbia openly insists on the ultra-nationalistic pretensions of Serbia in relation to the independent state of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The ultranationalist gathering in Chicago on January 9<sup>th</sup> is indicative of other discriminatory actions routinely underway in Republika Srpska, including the suppression of public

commemorations of the genocide in the Prijedor area, the prohibition of the use of the word “genocide,” and the denial of the right to install memorials to the victims at the sites of the concentration camps such as Trnopolje, Keraterm, and Omarska. While there are memorials to perpetrators of the genocide in Republika Srpska, for example, at Trnopolje and in the center of Visegrad, Bosniaks, for their part, have not been allowed to install a memorial at Trnopolje. Further, on January 23<sup>rd</sup>, with the support of a force of one hundred police, Bosnian Serb officials forcibly entered the Muslim cemetery in Visegrad and defaced the memorial to the victims by removing the word “genocide.” This heinous act of desecration and denial took place against the express opposition of Visegrad genocide survivors and their supporters from around the world. With the ultranationalist gathering in Chicago on January 9<sup>th</sup> it is clear that such acts of discrimination and intimidation have now spread to the United States.

The Bosnian people in the United States deserve to be represented by a Consul who promotes a multi-ethnic and democratic Bosnia and Herzegovina. Serbian people deserve to be represented by a political representative who promotes productive diplomatic relations between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, based on tolerance, democratic principles and international laws.

We, the undersigned, will boycott the services of these organizations, and have organized Peaceful Demonstration on February 27, 2014, in front of the Bosnian Consulate in Chicago, and we will ask for the resignation of these representatives. <https://www.change.org/petitions/zeljko-komsic-smjena-generalnog-konzula-u-cikagu-brane-pecanca-i-savjetnika-ambasadora-u-washington-dc-marinka-avramovica>

Finally, we request all appropriate diplomatic measures and political initiatives be taken to prevent the continuation of such ultranationalist gatherings--such as occurred in Chicago on January 9<sup>th</sup>-- that are a threat to human rights, and to a peaceful and democratic world. Thank you for your continued support for Bosnian people in the USA and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Sincerely,

Sanja Seferovic-Drnovsek, J.D., M.Ed  
Chairperson, Bosnian American Genocide Institute and Education Center (BAGI), Chicago, IL  
Member, Illinois Holocaust and Genocide Commission

David Pettigrew, Ph.D.  
Professor of Philosophy, Southern Connecticut University,  
Member, Steering Committee, Yale University Genocide Studies Program,  
International Team of Experts Institute for Research of Genocide Canada,  
Board Member, Bosnian American Genocide Institute and Education Center, Chicago, IL

Mesud Kulauzovic, President, Bosnian American Cultural Center (BACA); Northbrook, IL

Selena Seferovic, DoctorateCandidate,  
Director, Bosnian Library Chicago (BLC);

Idhan Tahirovic, President, Brotherhood of Bosniak Genocide Survivors, Chicago, IL

Mujko Erivic, M.A. of Law Science, Doctorate Candidate  
Editor “ United Bosnia”, Chicago, IL

Ferid Sefer, MA of Computer Science  
Editor, “Chicagoraja”

Mirsad Kurtagic, J.D.

---

c..c. The Honorable Secretary of State John Kerry, the U.S. Department of State