



MINISTRY OF SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT AND HIGHER EDUCATION
THE PUBLIC INSTITUTION
CENTRE FOR SOCIO-POLITICAL RESEARCH OF THE REPUBLIC OF SRPSKA

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To the Esteemed Members of the German Parliament,

Subject: Urgent Call for the Formal Recognition and Commemoration of the Genocide against the Serbs in the Independent State of Croatia

Dear Members of Parliament,

The April 22nd, marks a solemn occasion in the history of World War II and human rights — a day when, in 1945, the last group of inmates at the Jasenovac concentration camp, often referred to as the 'Auschwitz of the Balkans', made a desperate and heroic breach for freedom, choosing to face death rather than continue enduring unimaginable horrors. This day is commemorated as a Day of remembrance for the genocides against Serbs, Jews and Roma under the brutal regime of the Independent State of Croatia (ISC), which operated under the political and military control of Nazi Germany.

I write to you not only as the head of an institution that, amongst others, holds a mandate to preserve the culture of remembrance but as a Yad Vashem certified educator on the Holocaust since 2005 and as a direct descendant of the victims of the Genocide against the Serb population in the Independent State of Croatia. This letter aims to address a profound moral failure and a persistent omission in your historical narrative that continues to inflict pain on survivors and their families across generations.

Under the auspices of Nazi Germany, the ISC enacted a horrific plan to systematically annihilate about two million of the Serb population within its borders - aiming to kill one-third, expel another third, and forcibly convert the remainder through Catholicisation and Croatisation. This genocidal agenda was paralleled by the brutal persecution of Jews and Roma / Sinti within the same territories, all under German oversight and complicity. According to present estimations, this genocide affected between 1.1 and 1.3 million Serbs in the ISC, and this reflects a catastrophic period of targeted destruction that was ideologically and politically endorsed and orchestrated by Nazi Germany.

This appalling genocidal policy aimed at exterminating and assimilating the Serb population has been extensively analyzed and verified by a multitude of credible sources - including Raphael Lemkin, the architect of the Genocide Convention, proceedings from the Nuremberg Trials, and numerous leading scholars worldwide. These assessments unequivocally document and detail Germany's political, military and ideological complicity and culpability in these atrocities.

Like other genocides, this one warrants recognition under the guidelines established by the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. The global community, including Germany, bears the responsibility to acknowledge such crimes to prevent their recurrence and to uphold human rights universally.

To this day, the ongoing failure of Germany to formally recognize this genocide perpetuates an enduring injustice that reopens the wounds of the past. This omission can be perceived as a discriminatory act echoing old prejudices and Serbophobia - a suggestion that Slavic and Serbian lives hold lesser value, a painful reminder of the racial hierarchies promoted by Nazi ideology.

Germany bears a unique responsibility, given its historical role, to set an example in acknowledging and understanding these dark chapters in history and fostering an environment of tolerance and justice.

It is with deep concern that I highlight a troubling inconsistency in German national policy. While Germany has sponsored initiatives in the United Nations General Assembly to recognize and condemn recent mass crimes, it simultaneously shies away from a comprehensive and transparent reckoning with its own historical wrongs and its responsibility for the genocide against Serbs in the ISC. This selective approach not only undermines Germany's credibility on the international stage but also diminishes its moral authority to advocate for human rights and justice globally.

By sidestepping acknowledgment of this aspect of its history, Germany risks appearing to hide behind a facade of selective memory, avoiding the painful but necessary journey toward complete historical reconciliation. This perception of hypocrisy of Germany is particularly poignant and damaging, both domestically and internationally, as it suggests a persistence of past ideologies and prejudices under new guises.

Given all said, I respectfully urge the German Parliament to correct this omission promptly by adopting a resolution and to formally recognize the Genocide against the Serbs in the ISC. Additionally, I propose establishing April 22nd as a national 'Serb Genocide Remembrance Day' and integrating educational programs about it into the curriculum. Such actions would not only align German domestic policy with its international human rights stance but also strengthen the commitment to acknowledging all victims of past atrocities and ending their discrimination based on cultural identity.

Our institution is committed to supporting this cause through educational programs, research, and public outreach to ensure that the truth about this dark chapter in history is fully acknowledged and remembered. We stand ready to provide whatever assistance necessary to facilitate this crucial act of recognition.

Furthermore, I respectfully request to be kept informed of any parliamentary actions or decisions related to this issue. I respectfully advise that transparency in the process should be ensured as it is essential for the healing and reconciliation of historical injustices.

As we commemorate those who bravely fought for their dignity and lives on April 22nd 1945, let us also pledge to uphold the values for which they struggled. I look forward to your support and to witnessing a pivotal moment in our collective history where Germany acknowledges and rectifies its past, proving its dedication to truth, justice, and reconciliation.

Respectfully,



Director

Dušan Pavlović

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