

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. _____

Designating July 11, 2023, as a national day of remembrance for the victims
of the Srebrenica genocide.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mrs. SHAHEEN submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the
Committee on _____

RESOLUTION

Designating July 11, 2023, as a national day of
remembrance for the victims of the Srebrenica genocide.

Whereas the United States and the European Community
recognized the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina as an
independent state on April 7, 1992, and the United Na-
tions admitted the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina
as a member on May 22, 1992;

Whereas, during a campaign of aggression throughout Bosnia
and Herzegovina during the Bosnian War from 1992 to
1995, Bosniaks comprised the great majority of victims
of systematic campaigns of war crimes, crimes against
humanity, and genocide conducted by Serbs in Bosnia
and Herzegovina and Serb paramilitary forces with the
support of the Government of the Federal Republic of
Yugoslavia;

Whereas the Senate passed Senate Resolution 134 in the 109th Congress expressing the sense of the Senate that, from April 1992 to November 1995, Serb forces committed aggression against the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and genocide against Bosniaks, with direct support from authorities in Serbia;

Whereas a primary objective of Bosnian Serb leadership, supported by the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, was to establish an ethnically homogenous Serb state within Bosnia and Herzegovina, known as “Republika Srpska”;

Whereas Serb forces, under the command of subsequently convicted war criminals Ratko Mladic and Radovan Karadzic, made a concerted effort to control the town of Srebrenica and surrounding areas, which had strategic importance to the Serb campaign to create a Republika Srpska state from the inviolable territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina;

Whereas most of the population in Srebrenica was Bosniak, but attempts to erase Bosniaks from the national census impacted accurate reporting of and underestimated the number of Bosniaks in Srebrenica and surrounding areas and across Bosnia and Herzegovina;

Whereas, beginning in 1992, the humanitarian situation in Srebrenica and surrounding areas deteriorated, with Serb forces placing embargoes on food and critical supplies, which resulted in mass starvation and civilian deaths;

Whereas, in 1993, the United Nations, pursuant to Security Council resolutions 819 and 824, designated the towns of Srebrenica, Sarajevo, Zepa, Gorazde, Tuzla, and Bihac, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as “safe areas”, but failed to

demilitarize or protect the designated areas, including that of Srebrenica in 1995, despite the deployment of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) to Srebrenica;

Whereas, upon entering Srebrenica in July 1995, Serb forces deported Bosniak women and girls in buses after torturing and raping many of them, following a nearly year-long siege and starvation of the town and surrounding areas;

Whereas Serb forces separated military-age men and boys from other civilians in Srebrenica;

Whereas, in July 1995, more than 8,000 Bosniak men and boys were tortured and killed in and around the town of Srebrenica, including those men and boys that attempted to form a column and flee Srebrenica for safety but were attacked and killed by Serb forces;

Whereas the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, adopted at Paris December 9, 1948, defines genocide as “any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: (a) Killing members of the group; (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group”;

Whereas the Srebrenica genocide remains the biggest single event of mass extermination in Europe since the end of World War II;

Whereas the bodies of executed Bosniak men and boys were dumped into mass graves, which were subsequently dug up by Serb forces and moved to secondary or tertiary sites in an attempt to hide evidence of the genocide that was committed against Bosniaks;

Whereas remains of some of the victims of the Srebrenica genocide are still being discovered in 2023;

Whereas, in 1993, the United Nations established the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia through Resolution 827, succeeded by the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, which investigated, prosecuted, and passed judgement on international crimes committed during the breakup of the former Yugoslavia, including during the Bosnian War and the Srebrenica genocide;

Whereas, in November 1995, the peace agreement known as the “Dayton Accords” was concluded by the presidents of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Serbia to end the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina;

Whereas the Dayton Accords resulted in the adoption of a new constitutional regime that created 2 entities, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska, in Bosnia and Herzegovina;

Whereas, in a 1999 report on the fall of Srebrenica, the United Nations expressly recognized that the international community must accept its share of responsibility for failing to stop the Srebrenica genocide;

Whereas Serbia issued an apology for crimes committed by Serb forces during the breakup of the former Yugoslavia, including in Bosnia and Herzegovina and at Srebrenica

and surrounding areas, but did not recognize the mass murders in Srebrenica as genocide;

Whereas, in 2004, the Government of the Republika Srpska entity issued an apology for crimes in Srebrenica and acknowledged the deaths of some, but not all victims and did not recognize the mass murders in and around Srebrenica as genocide;

Whereas, in 2015, the Russian Federation vetoed a resolution at the United Nations Security Council condemning the mass murders at Srebrenica as genocide;

Whereas, since the Dayton Accords were concluded, political leaders in Bosnia and Herzegovina such as Milorad Dodik have undermined regional stability by engaging in genocide denial and spreading false information about the war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide that took place during the Bosnian War;

Whereas some political leaders have declined to categorize the mass murders at Srebrenica as genocide and continue to engage in harmful ethno-nationalist dialogue;

Whereas, in 2021, the High Representative, who oversees the civilian implementation of the Dayton Accords, outlawed genocide denial in Bosnia and Herzegovina;

Whereas the European Union Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR) oversees the military implementation of the Dayton Accords as a successor to the Stabilization Force, the NATO-led multinational peace-keeping force that was deployed to Bosnia and Herzegovina following the Bosnian War; and

Whereas the United States and the international community have made significant efforts to uphold peace and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina and recognize the

Srebrenica genocide, including by supporting the work of local, national, regional, and international nonprofit and nongovernmental organizations that preserve the memory of the victims of the Srebrenica genocide: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) designates July 11, 2023, as a national day
3 of remembrance for the victims of the Srebrenica
4 genocide, including by paying tribute to the families
5 of the more than 8,000 Bosniaks who were killed in
6 July 1995, the Bosniak communities in Bosnia and
7 Herzegovina, and the diaspora;

8 (2) condemns the genocide perpetrated in
9 Srebrenica and surrounding areas and the war
10 crimes and crimes against humanity committed in
11 Bosnia and Herzegovina during the Bosnian War;

12 (3) encourages continued efforts in Bosnia and
13 Herzegovina, Southeast Europe, and the world to
14 counter efforts to undermine respect for human
15 rights and fundamental freedoms and to promote re-
16 spect for all ethnic and religious groups;

17 (4) acknowledges the role of the High Rep-
18 resentative in promoting truth about the Srebrenica
19 genocide and maintaining peace and stability in Bos-
20 nia and Herzegovina;

1 (5) condemns the denial of the Srebrenica geno-
2 cide, which has been recognized as genocide by the
3 International Criminal Tribunal for the former
4 Yugoslavia and the International Court of Justice,
5 and condemns attempts to revise the history of the
6 Bosnian War;

7 (6) reaffirms support for the multi-ethnic and
8 multi-confessional culture and territorial integrity of
9 Bosnia and Herzegovina as the people of Bosnia and
10 Herzegovina pursue further Euro-Atlantic integra-
11 tion;

12 (7) condemns inflammatory rhetoric, including
13 that which is meant to destabilize Bosnia and
14 Herzegovina and the broader region, stoke ethnic
15 tensions, and promote social divisions related to de-
16 nying the Srebrenica genocide;

17 (8) calls on the international community to con-
18 tinue to work toward the sustainable return of
19 Bosniaks consistent with Annex 7 of the Dayton Ac-
20 cords throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina and to
21 Srebrenica, including by condemning ongoing vio-
22 lence and discrimination against, and attempts to
23 disenfranchise, Bosniaks;

24 (9) encourages continued political reconciliation
25 in the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in-

1 including the judicial system, including through the
2 strengthening of democratic institutions and edu-
3 cational institutions;

4 (10) recognizes that barriers to political or so-
5 cial reconciliation remain so long as national, re-
6 gional, and international actors engage in genocide
7 denial and ethno-nationalist rhetoric; and

8 (11) further calls on the international commu-
9 nity to continue educating current and future gen-
10 erations on the Srebrenica genocide, to promote rec-
11 ognition of the Srebrenica genocide, and, within all
12 the legal means provided by law and consistent with
13 respect for human rights, to refute and deter those
14 who continue to deny the facts of the Srebrenica
15 genocide.