

## Battling the Final Stages of Genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Denial and Triumphalism

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**Abstract :** Genocide denial is considered the final stage of genocide, which in the words of Gregory H. Stanton, represents "one of the most certain indicators of future genocides". Genocide denial in Bosnia and Herzegovina started in 1992, almost simultaneously with the genocide itself. Over the course of the three decades, different forms of genocide and war crimes denial have been developed by state officials, politicians, journalists, and civilians, both in Republika Srpska - the Serb-dominated entity within Bosnia and Herzegovina - and Serbia. Moreover, genocide and war crimes are not only denied but also glorified and celebrated, which was described as "triumphalism" by the Australian-Bosnian scholar Hariz Halilovich who suggested it be added as the 11th phase of Gregory Stanton's "10 stages of genocide." Since 2007, there have been a number of attempts to criminalize genocide denial at the state level in Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, all of them were unsuccessful due to the opposition of representatives of Republika Srpska. On July 23, 2021, the High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Valentin Inzko, used his power as the final authority in overseeing the civil implementation of the Dayton Peace Accords to impose amendments to Bosnia and Herzegovina's criminal code to ban the denial and glorification of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. However, immediately after the OHR's decision was announced, Milorad Dodik, a Serb member of Bosnia's tripartite presidency, held a press conference, publicly denied the genocide, and announced that this law would never be accepted in Republika Srpska. Denial remains explicit and public and is promulgated through official channels in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This paper will analyze the forms of genocide and other war crimes denial and glorification in the period after the amendments to the Criminal Code of Bosnia and Herzegovina were introduced, which include incrimination of public condoning, denial, gross trivialization or justification of a crime of genocide, crimes against humanity or a war crime established by a final adjudication of the international and domestic courts. We aim to determine the effect of the imposed law and the impact of the denial committed by high-ranking public officials on the denial and celebration of genocide and war crimes committed by ordinary citizens.

**Keywords :** genocide, denial, triumphalism, incrimination

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