**Government of Montenegro**

Mr. Milojko Spajić, President

Podgorica, 25 April 2024

Subject: **Initiative for Montenegro to co-sponsor the UN Resolution on genocide in Srebrenica - additional arguments**

 Dear Mr. Spajić,

we addressed you on Tuesday, April 16, with the initiative that Montenegro should co-sponsor the UN Resolution on the genocide in Srebrenica.

By then, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Slovenia and North Macedonia have already announced they would sponsor the resolution. In the meantime, Croatia also became a co-sponsor. Kosovo, which is not a UN member state, supports the resolution.

Of the former Yugoslav republics, only Montenegro and Serbia are not ready to sponsor the resolution.

Serbia does not support the resolution, even campaigning against it, because its authorities, in coordination with the authorities in the Republika Srpska in BiH, claim that it is directed against the Serbian people and that it represents them as "genocidal", although this has no basis in the text of the resolution, which is founded on the verdicts of the Hague Tribunal, which individualized the guilt for genocide.

Rwanda, for example, does not consider that the resolution passed by the UN General Assembly in 2003 on the genocide in that country makes its people genocidal.

We demand that you include the issue of sponsorship of this UN resolution by Montenegro in the agenda of tomorrow's Government session.

We expect the Government to decide to sponsor the resolution primarily for moral reasons and to express due regret for the fact that over 8,300 civilians were shot in Srebrenica in a few days in July 1995, of which 600 were children, while Montenegro, in alliance with Serbia, was supporting the Army of Republika Srpska, whose members committed that genocide.

We also believe that the following reasons oblige Montenegro to sponsor the resolution:

* Ratified international human rights treaties, including the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, oblige Montenegro to take measures to prevent genocide and other similar crimes;
* The Constitution of Montenegro prescribes the prohibition of causing or encouraging intolerance on any basis;
* Montenegro is a member of the United Nations Human Rights Council, which obliges it to work constructively in the promotion of human rights;
* Montenegro is a candidate for membership in the Security Council of the United Nations, which obliges it to be particularly committed to the international legal order and the improvement of security, especially in its immediate environment;
* Montenegro is a candidate for membership in the European Union, it stands out as the most advanced of all the countries that want that membership, and the Stabilization and Association Agreement obliges it to respect the decisions of the Hague Tribunal, including those on the basis of which seven were convicted of genocide in Srebrenica;
* The Parliament of Montenegro has a fixed position on the genocide in Srebrenica - on two occasions it adopted acts declaring that it strongly condemns that genocide and accepts that July 11th be designated as the Day of Remembrance, but to this day it has not implemented this decision;
* Montenegro has a Criminal Code prescribing prison sentences for those who commit genocide, but also for those who publicly approve, deny the existence, or significantly reduce the gravity of that crime;
* Public opinion surveys conducted by respectable professional agencies show that the vast majority of Montenegrin citizens condemn the genocide in Srebrenica, and that they consider it the most recognizable crime from the wars of the 1990s.

This issue was not raised from Montenegro. It is not any kind of diversion, distraction or attempt to influence daily political issues. The initiative was launched at the international level, and the state of Montenegro, as an equal and full member of the United Nations, should make its full contribution for humanitarian reasons and because building peace is an ongoing obligation, one that is not yet complete.

We are very concerned about your Government's reluctance to address this issue. Montenegro should have been among the first to announce that by sponsoring this resolution on the international stage, it is showing a break with the warlike and criminal policy of the nineties and that it is ready to provide lasting peace for its children and future generations.

In the meantime, as many as 83 NGOs in Montenegro supported the initiative that we sent you on April 16, as well as over 100 prominent individuals, including numerous public figures, who have been actively contributing to the public interest of Montenegro for decades. Montenegrin non-governmental organizations have never united before in such a large number to support an initiative.

We again appeal to you and the Government - make us proud citizens.

With respect,

**Jovana Marović**, Advisory Group "Balkans in Europe" (BiEPAG)

**Dina Bajramspahić**, civil activist

**Tea Gorjanc Prelević**, Human Rights Action

**Daliborka Uljarević**, Center for Civic Education

**Ljupka Kovačević**, Center for Women's and Peace Education ANIMA

**Maja Raičević, Center for Women's Rights**

**Milka Tadić Mijović**, Center for Investigative Journalism of Montenegro

**Milica Kovačević**, Center for Democratic Transition

**Zorana Marković**, Center for the Development of Non-Governmental Organizations

**Velija Murić**, Montenegrin Committee of Lawyers for Human Rights

**Olivera Nikolić**, Media Institute

**Ivana Vujović**, Juventas

**Aida Perović**, Prima

**Jovan Ulićević**, Spektra

**Demir Ličina**, Association "Strpci - Against Forgetting"