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Dear Sirs,

The Norwegian Helsinki Committee has learnt that the Harriman Institute at Columbia University arranges a lecture with President Milorad Dodik of the Republika Srpska, tomorrow Tuesday 25 October 2011. While fully respecting the right of the Institute to invite anyone it wishes to speak, there are serious concerns related to the title of Mr Dodik's lecture: "An American Foreign Policy Success Story: The Dayton Accords, Republika Srpska and Bosnia's European Integration".

The Norwegian Helsinki Committee also urges you to ensure that Mr Dodik is challenged on his numerous statements of denial of the Srebrenica genocide, as well as his efforts of obstructing prosecutions of war crimes in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Although the Dayton Accords ended the 1992-1995 war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, it's creation of Republika Srpska as a separate entity may be seen as one of its least acceptable elements. In fact, Republica Srpska, being established by policies of ethnic cleansing of non-serbs, including crimes against humanity and genocide, can hardly be seen as a success story. Still, return of non-serbs to their pre-war homes remains a serious problem due to practices of discrimination and other types of human rights violations.

Even more serious, Mr Dodik is known for his many statements denying that genocide took place in Srebrenica. Both as prime minister of Republika Srpska 2006-2010, and currently as

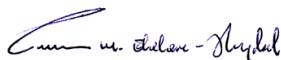
President, Dodik has repeatedly denied conclusions of numerous judgments of international courts (ICTY and ICJ) that the massacres of Bosniak men by Bosnian Serb forces in and around Srebrenica in July 1995 constitute genocide. Stating but one example, in an election speech to supporters in Srebrenica, Dodik said “it was not genocide here, and we won’t accept that it was” because “more Bosniaks left Srebrenica in those months... than died here”.¹

In addition, Dodik as a politician has continuously been trying to undermine Bosnian and Herzegovian’s effort to prosecute war crimes at its State Court. Some of his statements in this respect have been clearly racist, underlining that it is unacceptable that Serbs are convicted by Muslim judges.

The Norwegian Helsinki Committee is a strong supporter of freedom of expression and academic freedoms in line with international human rights standards. However, in providing Dodik with a prestigious platform to present his views, we think that Colombia University also has a responsibility to ensure that he is challenged on his denials of facts about the Srebrenica genocide, as well as his undermining of war crimes prosecutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Denial of genocide remains a serious impediment for further development and peace building in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Harriman Institute should ensure that it does not, unintentionally, facilitate such denials.

Sincerely yours,



Gunnar M. Ekeløve-Slydal
Deputy Secretary General

¹ International Crisis Group Europe Report No 214, 6 October 2011, *Bosnia: What does Republika Srpska want?*, page 23.