

Dr. sc. Elvedin Mulagić
elvedinedi@gmail.com

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DENIAL OF GENOCIDE – THE CASE OF GENOCIDE AGAINST BOSNIAKS AND GENOCIDE AGAINST THE TUTSI¹

Abstract: Genocides against the Tutsi in Rwanda and Bosniaks in Bosnia and Herzegovina were perpetrated almost at the same time and in the same international context in late 1990s. While genocides were being executed in the field, both were notoriously denied at the international level, both by UN bodies and officials of Big Powers. Aftermath genocide, the genocides have been denied on regular and systematic manner by individual denier, organized groups of deniers, certain organizations and governments of particular countries. Often, genocides committed against Tutsi and Bosniaks have been denied by same deniers. Prime interest of deniers of the genocide against Bosniaks, committed from 1992–1995 in Bosnia and Herzegovina, has been to diminish evidence of Genocide in Srebrenica in 1995, while in case of genocide against Tutsi that interest has been focused on circumstances which preceded to genocide and death toll of Tutsi. “Spontaneous act”, “retributive crime”, “double genocide” and “conspiracy theory” are just some of denial’s form which are examined in this paper. Finally, the paper attempts to point out the most used techniques of denial and mutual conceptual features of denial of the two cases of genocide. Presence of systematic manner and wide spread of the denial, for both genocides, proves that genocides ideology is still alive and has warned about possibility for a reoccurrence of the genocide.

Key words: Genocide, denial of genocide, forms of denial, techniques of denial, genocide against the Tutsi, genocide against Bosniaks, Genocide in Srebrenica, Genocid in Rwanda, spontaneous act, retributive crime, double genocide, conspiracy theory, a fabrication and exaggerating of war crimes, rationalization.

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NEGIRANJE GENOCIDA – SLUČAJ GENOCIDA NAD BOŠNJACIMA I GENOCIDA NAD TUTSIMA

Sažetak: Genocid nad Tutsima u Ruandi i genocid nad Bošnjacima u Bosni i Hercegovini počinjeni su gotovo istovremeno i u istom međunarodnom kontekstu, početkom 90-ih godina prošlog stoljeća. Dok je zločin genocida provođen na terenu, na međunarodnom nivou zvaničnici UN-a i vlade velikih sila bestijalno su negirale oba genocida. Nakon izvršenja genocida, oba zločina bivaju predmetom negiranja od strane pojedinaca, organiziranih grupa negatora, različitih organizacija, kao i zvaničnih institucija pojedinih država. Često genocide počinjene nad Tutsima i Bošnjacima negiraju isti negatori. Primarni interes negatora genocida nad Bošnjacima počinjenog u periodu 1992–1995. godine jeste reducirati dokaze o genocidu počinjenom u Srebrenici i oko nje 1995. godine, dok je u slučaju genocida nad Tutsima taj interes fokusiran na okolnosti koje su prethodile genocidu i na ukupan broj žrtava. “Spontani zločin”, “retributivni zločin”, “dvostruki genocid”, “teorija zavjere” samo su neki od oblika negiranja genocida nad Tutsima i genocida nad Bošnjacima koji su elaborirani u ovom radu. Naposljetku, rad pokušava ukazati na najčešće korištene tehnike negiranja i zajedničke konceptualne karakteristike negiranja dva slučaja genocida. Prisustvo sistemskih i organiziranih mjera u negiranju oba slučaja genocida dokazuje da je genocidna ideologija još uvijek aktivna i upozorava na mogućnost ponavljanja genocida.

Ključne riječi: genocid, negiranje genocida, oblici negiranja, tehnike negiranja, genocid nad Tutsima, genocid nad Bošnjacima, genocid u Srebrenici, genocid u Ruandi, spontani akt, retributivni zločin, dvostruki genocid, teorije zavjere, preuveličavanje i fabriciranje ratnih zločina, racionaliziranje zločina.

Introduction

The recurrence of genocide in Bosnia and Rwanda during the early 1990s exposed the hollow promise of “Never Again”. A legacy of impunity, cultivated under the First and Second Republics of Rwanda and within the former Yugoslavia, created the conditions for the subsequent genocides of the 1990s, committed against the Tutsi in Rwanda and

Bosniaks in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Both cases of genocide were faced with utter denial while genocides were perpetrating, as well as with denial in aftermath of the genocide. In the aftermaths of these genocides, deniers of these genocides have well established global network to spread their distortion of facts. Their efforts and actions are coordinated, and the consequences of their denial are immeasurable.

Rwanda has given a positive example of ways to confront genocide denial. A few years aftermath of the genocide Rwanda adopted the organic law on the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide Related Crimes or Other Crimes Against Humanity which defined that any person who publicly deny genocide, and commit similar act, can be sentenced from 10 to 20 years of prison. Deniers of Genocide against the Tutsi have been prosecuted and sentenced for denial for almost two decades. However, Rwanda's internal success in countering the genocide denial is not reflected and recognized abroad. The genocide against the Tutsi has been utterly denied at international level by governments' officials, representatives of international organizations, global deniers, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

Denial of the genocide against Bosniaks has been prevailed within Bosnia and Herzegovina and its a neighbourhood. Finally, the High International Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina imposed amendments to the Criminal Code in 2021 which criminalized genocide denial, but that unfortunately did not put an end to practice od genocide denial in Bosnia.

Deniers of two cases of genocide use some common forms of genocide denial, but also some specific forms, which are presented and explained in this paper.

Confronting genocide denial is mostly limited to national approaches. Thus, it must be stressed that there is no coordination among those countries in confronting genocide denial. On the contrary, genocide deniers are not missing coordination in their campaigns of genocide denial.

For survivors of genocide, the end of mass killing does not bring peace but inaugurates a new struggle against a persistent threat: the

systematic denial of the crimes committed against them. This paper seeks to understand why this secondary targeting occurs. It does so by conducting a comparative analysis of the denial narratives propagated after the genocides in Rwanda and Bosnia, aiming to identify their shared mechanisms and objectives.

Trivialization and denial of genocide due to Non-intervention Policy

The genocides against the Tutsi in Rwanda and the Bosniaks in Bosnia and Herzegovina occurred in parallel during the 1990s, within a shared international context marked by profound failure. As these atrocities unfolded, their characterization was systematically avoided at the highest levels. United Nations bodies and officials from major Western and global powers persistently refused to apply the legally precise term “genocide,” opting instead for euphemisms such as “ancient tribal hatreds,” “ethnic conflict,” “civil war,” and “ethnic cleansing.” This deliberate lexical evasion, while mass killing was actively underway, constituted a form of real-time denial that enabled international inaction..²

² As the genocide raged on, the UN, instead of criminalizing the murderous regime, pleaded for an end to the civil war and called for the implementation of the ‘power-sharing’ agreement, ostensibly in order to avoid taking sides. Wandia Njoya, “Human Rights: The Problem of Good Intentions”, in Gasanabo et al., *Confronting Genocide In Rwanda-Dehumanization, Denial and Strategies for Prevention*, 176-177.

President François Mitterrand was repeatedly using “the genocides in Rwanda” instead of Genocide against the Tutsi and stating “people have always killed each other in Rwanda”. J. Bizimana Damascène, “Genocide against the Tutsi: Analysis of forms and expressions of its denial”, 2011. Available at: <http://umuvugizi.wordpress.com/genocide-against-the-tutsi-analysis-of-forms-and-expressions-of-its-denial/?blogsub=confirming#subscribe-blog>

Adam Lebor represented ignorant approach of western and UN officials about genocide in Bosnia and Rwanda referring to genocides as “**centuries-old hatreds**” (Emphasis, added by author). Adam Lebor, “Complicity with Evil: the United Nations in the age of modern genocide”, Harrisburg: R.R. Donnelly, 2006, 56.

In order to conceal the Greater Serbian Project’s objectives at the international arena and provide an external legitimization of the genocide, **masterminds of Genocide against the Bosniaks have created a stereotype of the centuries old ethnic, tribal**

McClosky who examined official vocabulary of the Government of USA during the genocide in Bosnia, concluded that US officials in some cases used terms remarkably similar to genocide, but not the term genocide, like: “Massacres”, “Mass killing”, “War crimes”, “Terror”, etc.³ Thomas Odom, witnessing genocide against the Tutsi as US Defence Attaché in Kinshasa - DR Congo, and later in Kigali - Rwanda, revealed information that the State Department directed its officials to avoid describing ongoing mass killing in Rwanda as genocide.⁴ Odom’s testimony is valuable because it indicates brutality of Great powers’ approach in case of unfolding genocide in another country. That approach is mostly guided by their national interest while the mass suffering of another nation is of secondary importance.

Alison Des Forges stated: “Policymakers in France, Belgium, and the United States and at the United Nations all knew of the preparations for massive slaughter and failed to take the steps needed to prevent it.”⁵ Forges added that US President Bill Clinton used term “tribal resentment”, French President Francois Mitterrand “brutal slaughter” instead of genocide.⁶

and religious conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Emphasis, added by author).

See: L. Bryant, “The Betrayal of Bosnia”, University of Westminster: *Centre for the Study of Democracy*, 1993, available at: <http://www.ciaonet.org.proxy.www.merln-europe.org/wps/brl01/brl01.html> (Accessed on 1 January 2015).

Western political leaders spoke about ‘ancient animosity’, portraying Bosnians as a group of Balkan tribal killers who hated each other for centuries and who are unable to live in peace. Michael A. Sells, *Iznevjereni most: Religija i genocid u Bosni*, Sedam, Sarajevo, 2002, 3.

³ Frank McClosky, “Stav Sjedinjenih Američkih Država i Kongresa”, In: Čekić S. (ur.), *Genocid u Bosni i Hercegovini 1992.-1995.*, Sarajevo: Institut za istraživanje zločina protiv čovječnosti i međunarodnog prava, 1997, 542-547.

⁴ Odom stated: “In Kinshasa we of course knew of the war, and we read the cable traffic. That made us privy to the States Departments adherence to the position that the killing in Rwanda was not genocide. In fact we were directed not to refer to the slaughter as genocide in our daily contacts.” Thomas, P. Odom, *Journey into darkness: Genocide in Rwanda*, Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 2005, 76.

⁵ Alison Des Forges, “*Leave None to Tell the Story*” – *Genocide in Rwanda*, Sjedinjene američke države: Human Right Watch, 1992, 2.

⁶ A. D. Forges, “*Leave None to Tell the Story*” – *Genocide in Rwanda*, 20.

France was involved in genocide against the Tutsi while it was doing in favour of Hutu regime in 1990s. French involvement in genocide against the Tutsi is not limited just in giving the support to Habyarimana Government⁷ in the eve of genocide; it also goes further to the denial of genocide. President François Mitterrand had been repeatedly using “the genocides in Rwanda” instead of Genocide against the Tutsi while genocide was committed in the field and as well as aftermath genocide was in progress. Additionally, the role of French involvement, or France interest in denial of genocide against the Tutsi, is visible through the court’s investigation in France of the crash of President Habyarimana’s airplane, the case that was led by Judge Jean-Louis Bruguière.⁸ The directed terminology for avoidance of using the term of genocide can be only explained that it was the goal of the governments of US, France and other countries in order to justify their Non-Intervention Policy or to find excuse for their reluctance to stop the genocide.

Although, at the beginning of the genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the UN resolutions defined atrocities committed against Bosniaks as a genocide⁹, after some time the term of genocide was completely omitted from the official vocabulary of the UN and gave advantage to euphemism for genocide “Ethnic Cleansing”, which did not have any legal status in International law.¹⁰ Unfortunately, “Ethnic cleansing” became synonym for genocide against Bosniaks, widely used by international officials,

⁷ Report of Human Right Watch indicates that France was involved in arming Rwandan Armed Forces prior to genocide. “Arming Rwanda: The Arms Trade and Human Rights Abuses in the Rwanda War”, Human Right Watch, Vol. 6, Issue 1, Jan 1994 5-6. Available at: http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/RWANDA_941.PDF (Accessed on 17 June 2015).

⁸ President François Mitterrand had been repeatedly used “the genocides in Rwanda” instead of Genocide against the Tutsi while genocide was perpetrating in the field as well aftermath genocide. J. B. Damascène, “Genocide against the Tutsi: Analysis of forms and expressions of its denial”.

⁹ General Assembly of UN, “Situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina”, Rez. 47/121, 18.12.1992. Available at: <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/47/a47r121.htm> (Accessed on 4 October 2015).

¹⁰ Resolution of UN General Assembly from 1994 indicates double standard of UN in the term of use of term „Ethnic Cleansing “. Available at: http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?A/RES/49/10&Lang=E (Accessed on 4 October 2014).

masterminds of genocide, and even sometimes by academics.

Genocide against the Tutsi was under similar treatment by UN bodies. While genocide was ongoing there was no single word about genocide committing against Tutsi in UNSC resolutions 912 and 929. These resolutions narrowly defined mass atrocities committing against the Tutsi „as a dispute between two sides”.¹¹ It is not possible to learn from these UNSC resolutions that there was ongoing genocide of large scale and formidable in brutality in Rwanda. Finally, while genocide was reaching the final phase, only a few days prior to liberation of Rwandan capital Kigali by Rwandan Patriotic Front, UNSC acknowledged in Resolution 935 on 1th July 1994 “the continuing reports indicating that systematic, widespread and flagrant violations of international humanitarian law, including acts of genocide, have been committed in Rwanda.”¹²

While genocide was in progress there were many types of rationalization and trivialization used by officials of the UN and big powers to rationalize ongoing genocides and to find a confirmation for their reluctance to act against genocides. The UNSC works in accordance of national interests of “Big Five” permanent members. They often use a veto to block a decision of the UNSC for preventing or stopping a genocide. The failure of UNSC resolutions to define ongoing atrocities in Bosnia and Rwanda, as genocides, was just reflection of genocide denial carrying out by government of Big Powers. This form of genocide denial, used while

¹¹ “Appalled at the ensuing large-scale violence in Rwanda.” Resolution of UN SC No 912 on 21 April 1994, p.2. Available at: [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/912\(1994\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/912(1994)) (Accessed on 4 October 2014).

Statement by President of SC on 30 April 1994: “The massacres and wanton killings have continued unabated in a systematic manner in Rwanda...” Security Council 3371 Meeting Record, 1. Available at: http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/PV.3371 (Accessed on 4 October 2014).

“Deeply concerned by the continuation of systematic and widespread killings of the civilian population in Rwanda”, SC Resolution 929 on 22 June 1994. Available at: [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/929\(1994\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/929(1994)) (Accessed on 4 October 2014).

¹² On 1 July 1994 UN SC used term genocide first time to describe violence which had been committed in Rwanda. SC Resolution 935 on 1 July 1994. Available at: [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/935\(1994\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/935(1994)) (Accessed on 4 October 2014).

genocides were being executed in field, can be defined as a denial of genocide during its perpetration.¹³ The form of genocide denial which comes up aftermath genocide Gordon defines as a subsequent denial.¹⁴

The purpose of the denial of genocide during its perpetration at the international level was to absolve governments and UN from responsibility to respond under UNGC. This approach defined itself as the permanent respond for upcoming or ongoing genocides. There is no one example that UNSC has adopted pre-emptive decision to stop upcoming genocides. It rather faces consequences by appointing expert commissions and establishing ad hoc tribunals. So, it can be concluded that while genocide is in the progress there is no willingness within UN and Big Powers to recognize them. Genocide is always recognized and confirmed as aftermath genocide. The UNSC establishes ad hoc commission for examination of committed crimes and forms ad hoc tribunals while mass murders have already reached mass scale.

Denial's forms and techniques

Current denial of genocides shows that there are some trends of denial that have similar forms and actors in the most of the cases of genocides. The masterminds and perpetrators, accomplices of genocide and their supporters, deny genocide with different motives. As Israel Charny pointed out: “career, escaping liability, academics who enter into definitional battles...” are some of motivating factors for genocide denial.¹⁵ For successful denial of the genocide a key role is not played

¹³ E. Mulagić, *Negiranje genocida nad Bošnjacima*, 137, 179.

¹⁴ Gordon, S. Gregory, “Speech in Pro-and Post-Genocidal Environments: Strategies for Preventing Critical Mass”, in Gasanabo et al., *Confronting Genocide In Rwanda-Dehumanization, Denial and Strategies for Prevention*, 237, 238.

¹⁵ We can find motives for denial of genocide in someone attempt to absolve perpetrators from responsibility for their actions, desire to advance one's career. Further, he classified five characteristics of the “logic” of denials of genocide: In accordance with Israel Charny and Daphna Fromer denial can be classified as ‘Innocence and Self-Righteousness, Science in the Service of Confusion, Practicality, Pragmatism and Real politic, Distorted Linkages and Temporal Confusions and Indirection,

only by executors or masterminds of genocide, but it depends also on the acknowledgement of genocide by bystanders who determine whether genocide will be recognized and acknowledged or denied by masses. However, bystanders are often affected by genocide ideology, thus they are not willing to acknowledge occurrence of genocide, and eventually it causes spread of genocide denial. Cohen explained cause of denial:

*Such as disavowals are not private states of mind. They are embedded in popular culture, banal language codes and state-encouraged limitations - hence dual meaning of 'states of mind'. Culture encourages turning a collective blind eye, which leave horrors unexamined or unwatched normalized as everyday life.*¹⁶

Thus, as the preparation and execution of the genocide require *ideology and masterminds*, denial of genocide requires those as well. Wide spread of genocide denial is not possible without ideology of denial.¹⁷ Denial of genocide can vary from spontaneous denial to organized and systematic denial, depending on process of reconciliation of aftermath genocide as well as national legislation for countering genocide ideology.

Despite the fact that genocides are mostly internally generated, based on systems of domination within societies, all deniers always try to develop *international level conspiracy theory* as a base theory

Definitionalism, and Reversal.' Israel W. Charny and Eric Markusen, "The Psychology of Denial of Genocides" in I. Charny (ed.) *Encyclopaedia of genocide Volume 1*: Santa Barbara - California: ABC CLIO, 1999, 159-160.

¹⁶ Stanly Cohen, *States of Denial: Knowing about Atrocities and Suffering*. Malden, USA: Blackwell Publisher Inc., 2001, 76, 101.

¹⁷ Zgodić examined a final goal of genocide ideology: "Policy of *prolonged genocide... obsessively works* on violent extermination of signs, symbols and all other traces of the existence of Other on the *land of ancestors - on saint land* of nation... Every trace of their culture and evidence of their presence, even the memory, must be totally eradicated... The new architecture is being constructed in order to diminish every trace of existence unwanted, hated, hostile Other, whipping out with that architecture traces of *own crimes*, the crime to be ignored and forgotten, eventually, nation *with clean conscience* and *quite comfortable enjoy* narcissistically in new architecture and urban achievements its clean *ethnic existence*. Esad Zgodić, *Teritorijalni nacionalizam: Ideologija, zlotvorstvo i alternative*, Sarajevo: Institut za istraživanje zločina protiv čovječnosti i međunarodnog prava Univerziteta, 2012, 350.

for defence. Edward Herman and David Peterson are among those who use this technique in denial of both genocides. From their point of view genocide against the Tutsi and genocide against Bosniaks are just “proclaimed genocides by Western establishments”.¹⁸ Furthermore, they claim that all genocides committed at the end of XX Century were just implementation of “Imperial Doctrine of Humanitarian Intervention” or “Responsibility to Protect Doctrine”.¹⁹ Herman and Peterson do not try to prove their theory. They just use phrases that are catchy and attractive to the public, representing themselves as fighters for sovereignty of the countries. Herman and Peterson deny necessity of UN standing mechanism for prevention and stopping of the genocides, even though it is well known, from genocide theory, that there is usually no force within that country to stop ongoing genocide, and that only international response can stop the genocide. We can consider this as the most common

¹⁸ Herman and Peterson stated: “There has long existed a Western party-line on the dismantling of Yugoslavia...These roles paralleled the long-standing U.S. and British hostility towards Rwanda’s Hutu-majority government under President Juvenal Habyarimana, and their alignment with the armed forces of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF)...it was crucial to what would become the establishment narrative of the ‘Rwandan genocide’” Edward S. Herman and David Peterson, “George Monbiot and the *Guardian* on ‘Genocide Denial’ and ‘Revisionism’”. Available at: <http://mrzine.monthlyreview.org/2011/hp020911.html> (Accessed on 21 January 2014).

In another pamphlet they stated: “The Western establishment rushed to proclaim “genocide” in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Rwanda, Kosovo, and Darfur, and also agitated for tribunals to tell the alleged perpetrators accountable. Edward S. Herman and David Peterson, *Politics of Genocide*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 2010, 114.

¹⁹ “Who Was Behind the Rwandan Genocide? Conversations with Michel Chossudovsky and Robin Philpot. Global Research News Hour Episode 62”. Available at: <http://www.globalresearch.ca/rethinking-the-rwandan-tragedy-conversations-with-michel-chossudovsky-and-robin-philpot/5377061> (Accessed on 10 April 2014).

E. S. Herman and D. Peterson, “George Monbiot and the *Guardian* on ‘Genocide Denial’ and ‘Revisionism’”.

Keith Snow wrote: “Behind the genocide in Congo and elsewhere stand a host of well-paid academics, entertainers, politicians and professional propagandists for U.S. imperial policy”. Keith H. Snow, “Dr. Gerald Caplan and the Rwanda Genocide Cranks”, Available at: <http://blackagenda-report.com/content/dr-gerald-caplan-and-rwanda-genocide-crank>s (Accessed on 14 June 2015).

technique of genocide denial. Using this technique of genocide denial, deniers pretend to represent themselves as “fighters against imperialism”, in order to draw attention of media and public. This technique of denial is very effective, and many people easily get involved in such as kind of denial. Due to huge influence of this technique, we can also consider *international conspiracy theory* as ideology of denial of genocide at the global level.

Deniers often uphold conspiracy theory for root causes of the genocide. George Bogdanich and Edward Herman deny genocide in Srebrenica by conspiracy theory that Srebrenica genocide was plan of Bosnian leadership to swap Srebrenica for another Bosnian city and to trigger Western military intervention.²⁰ Report of UNSG to General Assembly regarding the fall of Srebrenica clearly refuted this conspiracy theory.²¹ On the other side Herman and Peterson developed almost the same conspiracy theory for genocide committed against Tutsi saying “treat the vast bloodbaths of 1994 as resulting from a pre-planned conspiracy by the RPF, hatched no later than 1990, to seize state power within Rwanda by using aggression, terrorism, and an eventual military takeover of the country.”²² For globally known massacres committed against Bosniaks in Markale market in Sarajevo and Tuzlanska Kapija in Tuzla, Herman and Bogdanich wrote that it was “conspiracy theory” organized by Bosniaks who wanted to “to demonize the Serbs and to initiate foreign military intervention”.²³ This technique of denial is based on notorious

²⁰ Edward S. Herman, *The Srebrenica Massacre: Evidence, Contest, Politics*, Evergreen Park: Alphabet Soup, 2011, 58, 284.

²¹ “No evidence reviewed in the process of assembling this report suggests that any party, Bosnian or international, engineered or acquiesced in the fall of Srebrenica, other than those who ordered and carried out the attack on it. My personal belief is that human and institutional failings, at many levels, rather than willful conspiracy, account from why the Serbs were not preventing from overrunning the safe area of Srebrenica”. “The Fall of Srebrenica”, Report of the UN SC Secretary-General pursuant to General Assembly resolution 53/35, 15 November 1999, par. 485.

²² E. S. Herman and D. Peterson, “George Monbiot and the *Guardian* on ‘Genocide Denial’ and ‘Revisionism’”.

²³ Herman wrote: “A fifth myth or myth-set that grew out of the need to demonize the Serbs, and as part of an effort to get NATO to come to Bosnia Muslim aid with bombs, is that the Serbs engaged in the ruthless shelling of Sarajevo civilians in

lies and falsification, refuted by verdicts of ICTY,²⁴ with the purpose to replace the roles of victim and oppressor.

There are two specific techniques of denial of the genocide against the Tutsi. First one is allegation that the death of the former Rwandan President Juvénal Habyarimana caused the genocide and that genocide was spontaneous outburst of rage among Hutu masses following the death of president Habyarimana.²⁵ This claim is supported with falsehood that there was no organized Hutu government after the assassination.²⁶ Another technique of denial, even more used, says that genocide and all war crimes committed against the Tutsi were provoked by offensive

three massacres: in 1992 (the 'Breadline Massacre'), in 1994 (the Market Markale or 'Market Massacre'), and 'Second Market Massacre' in 1995." E. S. Herman, *The Srebrenica Massacre: Evidence, Contest, Politics*, 27.

Bogdanich stated "There is substantial testimony from senior military and diplomatic officials that Muslim forces deliberately undertook operations that would portray themselves as victims." George Bogdanich, "Prelude to the Capture of Srebrenica" in E. S. Herman, *The Srebrenica Massacre: Evidence, Contest, Politics*, 44.

²⁴ "Vojska Republike Srpske (VRS)" had committed two massacres of civilian population at flea market Markale downtown Sarajevo by artillery. In first massacre, committed on 5 February 1994, 68 civilians were killed and 139 wounded. Karović, Merisa, „Masakr na Markalama 5. februara 1994. godine“, in: Rasim Muratović (ed.), *Politički i vojni značaj odbrane Sarajeva 1992.-1995.*, Sarajevo: Institut za istraživanje zločina protiv čovječnosti i međunarodnog prava Univerziteta u Sarajevu, 2014, 548.

In second Markale massacre, committed on 28 August 1995, 37 civilians were killed and 90 were wounded.

²⁵ Robin Philpot said that Rwandan killings were initiated by the Tutsi-dominated RPF. Available at: <http://www.globalresearch.ca/rethinking-the-rwandan-tragedy-conversations-with-michel-chossudovsky-and-robin-philpot/5377061se> (Accessed on 13 May 2014).

In 2006, French judge Louis Jean Bruguiere released basic denial falsehood that the downing of President's Habyarimana's plane that caused the genocide. J. B. Damascène, "Genocide against the Tutsi: Analysis of forms and expressions of its denial".

"The objective of the RPF was to eliminate Hutu from the power. The RPF was strong army. Hutu were scared. When RPF killed a President Hybarimana, it had to be reaction. That is the main reason for reprisal against Tutsi." An interview with member of Jeremi Group, taken in Bukavu – DRC on 17 May 2014 by an author.

²⁶ K. H. Snow, "Dr. Gerald Caplan and the Rwanda Genocide Cranks".

actions and rages of RPF.²⁷ Thus, as notable Holocaust and genocide scholar Deborah Lippstadt says “what they cannot deny or distort, they rationalize and justify”.²⁸ When evidence about committed genocide is undeniable, like genocide against the Tutsi, then deniers try to rationalize and justify committed genocide.

The purpose of first genocide denial technique is to develop theory of genocide against the Tutsi as *a spontaneous act*, and other one to uphold theory of *genocide as a retributive crime*. Those are false flags which neglect the genocide theory that - genocide can never occur spontaneously,²⁹ that it always requires massive preparation and it is developed throughout many stages³⁰. Genocide is a long term project, project to which has to be invested for long period of time in order it could be implemented.

Aforementioned techniques have mutual aim to distort and twist evidence proving that Rwandan Government had planned to exterminate Tutsi. This is the most usual approach of genocide deniers in any case

²⁷ For an example Christian Davenport and Allan Stam says: “There’s also no question that large-scale retribution killings took place throughout the country - retribution killings by Hutu of Tutsi, and vice versa. Perhaps the most shocking result of our combination of information on troop locations involved the invasion itself: The killings in the zone controlled by the FAR seemed to escalate as the RPF moved into the country and acquired more territory. Christian Davenport and Allan C. Stam, “What Really Happened in Rwanda?”. Available at: <http://www.psmag.com/navigation/politics-and-law/what-really-happened-in-rwanda-3432/> (Accessed on 27 May 2014).

K. H. Snow says “Every pogrom against Tutsi was provoked by RPF, repeatedly, beginning with their initial invasion in 1990, and not by the Habyarimana Government. Additionally, every pogrom against Tutsi in Rwanda alleged to have occurred prior to 1973 was provoked by extremist Tutsi Guerrilla’s attacking Rwanda from outside the country”. “Dr. Gerald Caplan and the Rwanda Genocide Cranks”.

²⁸ Deborah Lipstadt, *Denying the Holocaust: the Growing Assault on the Truth and Memory*, London: Penguin, 1993, 110.

²⁹ Kenneth Campbell pointed out that Genocide cannot be spontaneous act, and it is so sever crime that can never be secondary aspect of any conflict. Kenneth J. Campbell, *Genocide and the Global village*, New York: Palgrave, 2001, 34.

³⁰ Gregory H. Stanton, “the Ten stages of Genocide”, Available: <http://www.genocidewatch.org/10stagesofgenocide.ppt> (Accessed on 11 April 2013).

of genocide in order to distort evidence of genocide's intent. Gregory Stanton, as a notable expert, was observing and warning for ongoing preparations for genocide in Rwanda, as early as 1989. He warned the Government for upcoming genocide, but the Rwandan Government kept quiet on warnings.³¹

Deniers know very well that genocide without evidence of intent and plan cannot be proved.³² For instance they define facts that genocide against the Tutsi was committed by the Rwandan Army, the National Police, government-backed militias and the Hutu civilian population as "the official narrative". This notorious denial ("the official narrative") is used in describing atrocities committed against the Tutsi just to reinforce their allegation that genocide against the Tutsi was the creation of "the Responsibility to Protect Doctrine" which authorizes military intervention in violation of national sovereignty, all in the name of preventing a humanitarian catastrophe". Among those who use this phrase are Robin Philpot, Edward S. Herman, David Peterson, Keith Harmon Snow, etc.³³ Tim Gallimore, former spokesman of ICTR, asserts that defence attorneys, like Robin Philpot, are the most proactive and the

³¹ G. Stanton was posted to Rwanda in 1989 by US State of Department as a consultant to the Ministry of Justice. He stated "You could see it coming. It was like the small tremors that signal the beginning of an earthquake, or eruption of volcano. In 1989 he warned the President of Rwanda's Courte of Cassation and President Haybarimana for upcoming genocide. Linda Melvern, "The Eight Stage/Distorting the Evidence: Fact and Figures in a Campaign of Genocide Denial" in Gasanabo et al., *Confronting Genocide In Rwanda-Dehumanization, Denial and Strategies for Prevention*, 237, 238.

³² Peter Erlinder stated that "There was no plan on of Rwandan government and military for extermination of the Tutsi". Garrison, Anna, "Rwanda Genocide: Erlinder v. Kagame in the court of public opinion", Available at: <http://sfbayview.com/2011/rwanda-genocide-erlinder-v-kagame-in-the-court-of-public-opinion/> (Accessed on 25 January 2014).

³³ "The genocide in Rwanda was one hundred percent the responsibility of the Americans", An interview of Global Research News Hour with Michel Chossudovsky and Robin Philpot. Available at: <http://www.globalresearch.ca/rethinking-the-rwandan-tragedy-conversations-with-michel-chossudovsky-and-robin-philpot/5377061> (Accessed on 25 January 2014).
H. E. Herman and D. Peterson, "George Monbiot and the *Guardian* on 'Genocide Denial' and 'Revisionism'".

most influential deniers of the genocides, and that “denial of genocide against the Tutsi is more prevalent abroad than within Rwanda”³⁴

Major emphasis of deniers of the genocide against the Tutsi is to prove that plan to eliminate the Tutsi “had never existed” and that “the killing happened spontaneously”.³⁵ They know how to draw attention of public and media, and how to exploit it for the sake of their ideology.

Fabrication and exaggerating of war crimes committed against oppressor’s group is another technique of genocide denial.³⁶ Exaggerating of intensity of war crimes against Serbian people is presented in case of Srebrenica region. Herman wrote that “Bosniaks death toll from Srebrenica in July 1995 may not have been more numerous than the Serb civilians killed in the towns near Srebrenica by Bosnian Muslim (well over 1,000, with one estimate as high as 3,2879)”.³⁷ Corwin stated “it is likely that the number of Muslim dead was probably no more than the number of Serbs that have been killed in Srebrenica and its environs”.³⁸ “Independent International Commission” established by the Government of Republika Srpska, also, drastically inflated the number of Serbian civilian victims in Srebrenica region.³⁹ One of the huge falsifications of deniers Genocide in Srebrenica is presenting UN safe area Srebrenica as “Muslim Military base for launching military raids” toward “unarmed”

³⁴ Even though there are legal finding for commitment of genocide against the Tutsi by ICTR defense attorneys like Robin Philpot do not use term *genocide*. They have knowledge, experience. They successfully use media to spread their falsifications. An Interview with Tim Gallimore, taken by author in Rwanda, Kigaly on 30 April 2014.

³⁵ Linda Melvern, “The Eight Stage/Distorting the Evidence: Fact and Figures in a Campaign of Genocide Denial”, 251.

³⁶ Fabrication of war crimes committed against Serbian people in Bosnia is mostly presented in cases of “Dobrovoljacka ulica” in Sarajevo and “Tuzlanska kolona” in Tuzla. See: J. Medić et al, *Politics of Revisionism: Denail of Crimes and Genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1992–2025*, 49-64; E. Mulagić, *Negiranje genocida nad Bošnjacima*, 176-177.

³⁷ E. S. Herman, *The Srebrenica Massacre: Evidence, Contest, Politics*, 14.

³⁸ *Ibid*, Foreword.

³⁹ J. Medić, et. al, *Politics of Revisionism: Denail of Crimes and Genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1992–2025 (A Research Study)*, 29-30.

Serbian villages nearby Srebrenica.⁴⁰ However, ICTY judgment in case against Naser Oric revealed that operations were spontaneous due to lack of food and that Serbian villages nearby Srebrenica were militarized.⁴¹ The exaggeration of war crimes is just first step in establishing pseudo theory of Genocide in Srebrenica as a “Retributive crime”.

The fabricating and exaggerating of war crimes is also present in denial of genocide against the Tutsi. In case of genocide against the Tutsi number of Hutu victims is often exaggerated for the sake of pseudo theory of “Double genocide”. Christian Davenport and Allan Stam inflated a death toll of Hutu between 500,000 and 700,000, and stated “that the majority of victims were in fact Hutu, not Tutsi”.⁴² Peterson and Herman appeared in denial of this case of genocide, like in any another case, stating that “great majority of deaths were Hutu”.⁴³ Jeremie group from Bukavu, DR Congo, is also engaged in denial of genocide against the Tutsi. There are many articles and paper published by this group which insists “there were two genocides” or “the double genocide” in Rwanda in 1990s.⁴⁴ Furthermore, they were not willing to admit in an interview with us that majority of 1994 victims were Tutsi.⁴⁵ However, there are also some academics who assert that genocide was also committed against moderate Hutu. It is not questionable that moderate Hutu were

⁴⁰ John Laughland, “The Srebrenica ‘Genocide’: Totem of the New World Order”. Available at: <http://www.balkanstudies.org/articles/srebrenica-genocide-totem-new-world-order> (Accessed on 14 June 2015); E. H. Herman, “The Srebrenica Massacre: Evidence, Contest, Politics”, 19.

⁴¹ Judgement of ICTY vs. Naser Oric, par. 110, 111, 664. Available at: <http://www.icty.org/x/cases/oric/tjug/en/ori-jud060630e.pdf> (Accessed on 20 June 2015).

⁴² C. Davenport and A. C. Stam, “What Really Happened in Rwanda?”.

⁴³ Edward S. Herman and David Peterson, “We’re not genocide deniers. We just want to uncover the truth about Rwanda and Srebrenica”. Available at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/jul/19/not-genocide-deniers-uncover-truth?INTCMP=SRCH> (Accessed on 2 August 2011).

⁴⁴ For more see: J. B. Damascène, “Genocide against the Tutsi: Analysis of forms and expressions of its denial”.

⁴⁵ Representatives of JEREMI Group stated: “When we find the bodies of murdered who can determined if victim is Tutsi or Hutu?. We do not know how many Tutsi or Hutu were killed.” An interview with member of JEREMI Group, taken in Bukavu – DRC on 17 May 2014 by an author.

targeted by *executioners of the genocides*. It must be stressed they were not targeted because of their ethnic identity, rather because they were opposing to atrocities. It is necessary to stress that there were atrocities by the RPF, committed aftermath genocide, but we cannot talk about plan for extermination of Hutu.

Genocide in Srebrenica is also worldwide famous because of existence large number of mass graves, but that is not a constraint to deniers. Herman trays do diminish Srebrenica Mass Graves evidence: “But the evidence for this structure of primary, secondary, and even tertiary mass graves is weak and the rationale unconvincing that the Bosnian Serbs would have had the resources in the midst of a war and when under serious military pressure to carry out mass executions and mass burials, and then subsequent to this, mass exhumations and mass reburials, is implausible.”⁴⁶ An attempt to diminish Srebrenica Mass Graves evidence is ridicules, because there is vast of evidence confirming mass graves in Srebrenica region. ICTY concluded that Army of Republic Srpska (VRS) conducted systematic burial and reburial operations from July to November 1995 in orders to conceal traces of mass execution.⁴⁷ The Courte of Bosnia and Herzegovina also found that systematic reburial of genocide victims, during the aftermath genocide, was carried out.⁴⁸ There have been discovered 133 mass graves from Genocide in Srebrenica. Almost 40 percent of discovered mass graves were secondary mass graves.⁴⁹

Denial of Genocide in Srebrenica has many features. Mostly because there is a bulk of evidence regarding the committed genocide against the Bosniaks in Srebrenica and Podrinje region, which makes genocide

⁴⁶ E. S. Herman, *The Srebrenica Massacre: Evidence, Contest, Politics*, 19.

⁴⁷ ICTY, Case No. IT-09-92-T, *Trial Judgement Ratko Mladić*, Volume IV, 22 November 2017, 1574-1584.

⁴⁸ A Judgment of the Courte of Bosnia and Herzegovina to Miloradu Trbiću. Dostupno na: <http://www.sudbih.gov.ba/index.php?id=1403&jezik=b> (Accessed on 10 February 2013).

⁴⁹ Čekić, Smail, Arnaut Haseljić, Meldijana and Macić, Bećir, *Masovne grobnice u Bosni i Hercegovini: Sigurnosna zona Ujedinjenih Nacija Srebrenica*, Institut za istraživanje zločina protiv čovječnosti i međunarodnog prava Univerziteta u Sarajevu, Sarajevo, 2010, 658.

committed in Srebrenica region the best ever documented genocide. International Commission for missing persons (ICMP)⁵⁰ has conducted the most successful project of human remains identification using DNA sample method in the history. More than 7100,⁵¹ out of 8372, victims of Genocide in Srebrenica have been identified. Stefan Karganović, founder of NGO “Srebrenica Historical Project,” which is financed by the Government of Republic of Srpska, pretends to represent himself as an academic. For the released forensic identification results of ICMP of human remains from Srebrenica mass graves he wrote:” those results are in fact quite sensational: 6,481 Srebrenica victims currently identified.”⁵² That statement indicates turning point of a denial of Genocide in Srebrenica. Once ICMP identified significant number of exhumed genocide victims then deniers do not assert any more that “number of victims is insignificant”, however, they change their approach and assert that number “now is sensational large”. This can be defined as advance form of genocide denial that proves how deniers are adaptable on new circumstances.⁵³

When we refute or recognize denials’ technique they always create new technique for denial of genocide. On the next level of Genocide in Srebrenica’s denial Karganovic wrote: ”DNA procedure can establish, with various degrees of certainty, the deceased’s probable identity. It cannot help determine the time and manner of death.”⁵⁴ Herman and Peterson also engaged in denial of DNA forensic results: “DNA cannot fix the mode or time of death, so that when those 6,595 or 8,100 individuals died, and whether they were executed, killed in battle, or

⁵⁰ The International Commission on Missing Persons.

⁵¹ Amor Mašović, “Until now 7100 Srebrenica genocide victims have been found”. Available at: <http://www.vijesti.ba/vijesti/bih/277533-Dosad-pronadjeno-oko-7100-zrtava-genocida-nepronadjene-krije-Drina.html> (Accessed on 15 June 2015).

⁵² Stefan Karganović, “DNA Testing and the Srebrenica Lobby”, *The Lord Byron Foundation for Balkan Studies*, 13. July 2010. Available at: <http://www.balkanstudies.org/articles/dna-testing-and-srebrenica-lobby> (Accessed on 17 May 2011).

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

died from natural causes.”⁵⁵ Insisting on the mode or time of death of identified victims indicated that deniers do not have any other remained technique for denial. Insisting that there is no possibility to confirm a mode and time of death is just an attempt to neglect bulk of overall evidence about Genocide in Srebrenica: plan for extermination, mass graves, reburial of victims, etc. There is no known case of genocide that there was examination of time, circumstances, and causes of the death of every single victim. Genocide is not ordinary criminal act, resulted with death of a few persons, which should require detailed insight into death of single victim. The circumstances of death of genocide victims is determined by intent of genocide and plan for execution of genocide; evidence about mass killings, mass graves, reburial of human remain from mass graves, survivor’s testimonies, confession of perpetrators, and other bulk of evidence.

Denial of the Genocide against Bosniaks is buttressed by institutions of Republika Srpska as well as with obstruction of building monuments for victims of genocide. Case of Prijedor is a severe example of such as obstruction. Even though in Genocide in Prijedor there were killed more than 3000 Bosniaks’ civilians, a lot of them in well-known concentration camp: Tronopolje, Omarska, Keraterm and etc., local administration has obstructed building of monument for the victims of genocide. Furthermore, they prohibited use a term genocide during commemorations and anniversary.⁵⁶ Another example is a monument for genocide victims within cemetery Strazište in Visegrad. A term of genocide was forcibly removed from the monument by municipal services company and municipal inspection in 2014.

Even though the High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina imposed amendments to the Criminal Code in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2021 which criminalizing genocide denial, that unfortunately did not put an end to practice od genocide denial in Bosnia. That has not been

⁵⁵ E. S. Herman and Peterson, D., “George Monbiot and the *Guardian* on ‘Genocide Denial’ and ‘Revisionism’”; E. S. Herman and D. Peterson, “We’re not genocide deniers. We just want to uncover the truth about Rwanda and Srebrenica”.

⁵⁶ J. Medić et al., *Politics of Revisionism: Denial of Crimes and Genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1992-2025*, 46.

yet resulted with a significant prosecution of genocide denial.⁵⁷ At the contrary, deniers of Genocide against the Tutsi have been prosecuted and sentenced for denial for almost two decades.⁵⁸

In the case of genocide against Bosniaks it is also a challenge widespread of glorification of convicted war criminals especially Radovan Karadžić and Ratko Mladić former political and military leaders of Republika Srpska.⁵⁹

Conclusion

In accordance with examined techniques and forms of denial genocides against Tutsi and Bosniaks, it can be summarized that there are common conceptual features for both cases of genocide, but also some unique and specific features. Both genocides, against Tutsi and against Bosniaks, were denied at the international level during their perpetrations by UN bodies or official from big powers with variety of trivializations, rationalizations and directed diplomatic terminology in order to escape from use of the term *genocide* in describing mass killings in Bosnia and Rwanda. Hence, there was necessity to find means of rationalization, which is afterward found in a justification of “Centuries old ethnic/tribal

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ “10 to 20 years prison shall be required for any person who shall publicly deny the genocide, minimize its impact, justify or approve genocide, hide or destroy genocide facts through his/her words, writings, drawings or any other form.” “Mechanisms to Fight Against the Negation of the Tutsi Genocide”, 7.

Boubacar Boris Diop, “Denial through Silence... (Africa faced with the Genocide against the Tutsi)” in Gasanabo et al., *Confronting Genocide In Rwanda-Dehumanization, Denial and Strategies for Prevention*, 63.

⁵⁹ J. Medić et al., *Politics of Revisionism: Denial of Crimes and Genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1992-2025*, 10.

While this paper was being completed The Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina issued first ever Appellate Judgement for glorification of war criminals, sentencing Vojin Pavlović for three years of prison. “Drugostepena presuda: Vojinu Pavloviću povećana kazna: Za veličanje ratnog zločinca Ratka Mladića dobio tri godine zatvora”, Detektor.ba, 21 November 2025. Available at: <https://n1info.ba/vijesti/vojinu-pavlovicu-povecana-kazna-za-velicanje-ratnog-zlocinca-ratka-mladica-dobio-tri-godine-zatvora/> (Accessed on 25 November 2025).

hatreds and disputes”. The objective of such approach was to abolish the governments and UN from responsibility for failing to respond in accordance to the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (UNGC). This approach has been profiled as standard response on upcoming genocides and genocides in progress, what gives very pessimistic assessment for reaction of International Community in the future in any case of unfolding genocides.

In the context of subsequent denial, both cases of genocides are denied on regular bases by organized groups of deniers. Denial of genocide against the Tutsi is more prevalent abroad while denial of genocide against Bosniak is more prevalent within Bosnia and Herzegovina and its neighbouring countries. Denial of genocide against Bosniaks has systematic and institutional features, presented in systematic obstruction of memorialization of genocide by institutions of entity Republic of Srpska. At the same time that indicates that genocide ideology has yet not been eliminated.

We can classify deniers of genocides against the Tutsi and Bosniaks in many groups, but two groups are more prevalent; notorious deniers who do not pay attentions to the validity of their claims, and deniers who pretend to be representatives of academics. In the regard of genocide against the Tutsi and Bosniak we can consider Herman and Peterson as main “authoritative” source for deniers. Edward Herman, David Peterson, Robin Philpot, Christian Davenport, Allan Stam and Peter Erlinder are the most quoted authors by other deniers. These and other genocide deniers have established a global network of genocide denial. They do not only deny particular case of genocide, but they have tried to diminish the whole concept of genocide, and the matter of their denial is almost every case of genocide. Denier’s approach is based on use of the same techniques and forms, typically quoting each other’s falsehoods.⁶⁰ When they are forced to use scientific resources and to quote scholars,

⁶⁰ “Deniers will, typically, state their arguments are verified or unverified only by another denier”. Shermer, Michael and Alex Grobman, *Denying History: Who Says the Holocaust Never Happened and Why do They Say it?*, Berkely: University of California Press, 2002, 34, 249, 250.

then they cite genocide scholars in the way that they simply omit the facts that contradict their claims or distort meanings of findings and conclusions, knowing that fewer readers will check reliability of the sources.⁶¹ One of subtler deniers' techniques, which draws sympathy of many people, is representing themselves as fighter against imperialism or "Doctrine to intervene" of Big Powers. They are very flexible in this approach. If one technique is revealed by researchers and public, they will adopt another technique. The strategy of deniers is always to distort the truth and history despite how it is reliable and firm. A prime objective of deniers' endeavour is to support ideology that caused genocide. The denier's effort to rewrite history has an aim to support accomplishment of their cause. The purpose of genocide denial is to achieve the final goal of genocide; with its final stage to preserve the genocide heritage and to acquire legitimacy for those achievements.

It can be concluded that there is a certain difference between first and second generation of deniers, going from the Holocaust to the post-modern era. The new generation of deniers use more sophisticated approach, trying to incline in academic arena and initiate discourse with genocide scholars. Thus, it requires adequate response from genocide scholars. Modern genocide scholars cope and counter genocide denial. In open discourse with deniers they refute and demolish allegations, falsehoods and falsifications of deniers. Refutation of deniers' falsifications is very important in countering to genocide denial. This is a matter of genocide prevention. That helps in our endeavour to stop deniers' attempt to distort or to rewrite the history.

⁶¹ "They rely on books that directly contradict their arguments, quoting in a manner that completely distorts the authors' objectives. Deniers count on the fact that the vast majority of readers will not have access to the documentation or make the effort to determine how they have falsified or misconstrued information. D. Lipstadt, *Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on the Truth and Memory*, 111.

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