

Returnees Extend Deadline for Srebrenica Status Change

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By Merdijana Sadovic in Sarajevo (TU No 493, 16-Mar-07)

Several hundred returnees claim Srebrenica should be excluded from the jurisdiction of Republika Srpska, RS, because the International Court of Justice, ICJ, declared last month it holds RS forces accountable for genocide which took place in this eastern Bosnian town in 1995.

The ICJ acquitted Serbia of responsibility for the Srebrenica genocide and put the blame on Bosnian Serb forces.

Last week, Muslim returnees to Srebrenica threatened a mass exodus if their demands for special status were not met by March 14.

Bosnian Serb authorities led by RS prime minister Milorad Dodik described these attempts to change the status of Srebrenica “illegal” and “against the RS constitution”. He also warned that “appropriate measures will be taken against all persons who attempt to undermine the integrity of Republika Srpska”.

Dodik said he would issue a formal protest to any country which attended the March 12 meeting to discuss Srebrenica’s future.

In the end, ambassadors from several Muslim countries came, along with a number of Bosnian politicians including the Muslim and Croat members of the Bosnian state presidency, Haris Silajdzic and Zeljko Komsic. Serb member Nebojsa Radmanovic did not attend.

Silajdzic and Komsic supported the request for special status for Srebrenica, and also called for measures to solve problems which they said the Bosnian Serb authorities had failed to address, including lack of jobs and healthcare for Muslim residents.

At the end of the meeting, the returnees agreed to postpone their decision on leaving the town until April 12, in order to give more time to the authorities at entity and state level to consider their request.

The status of Srebrenica could only be changed with the consent of Bosnian Serb members of parliament, which seems very unlikely.

Location: [Serbia](#)

Topic: [Briefly Noted](#)

Focus: [International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia](#)

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