

Honorable Mayor:

As community leaders and representatives of several leading community organizations of the Bosnian diaspora in North America, we write to you to seek your support in condemning and urging the cancelation of the screening of Boris Malagurski's controversial film "Srpska: The Struggle for Freedom" in your city.

The 1992-1995 war in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Bosnia) was the most violent armed conflict on European soil since the end of World War II. During the Bosnian war, the entire world witnessed daily atrocities, war crimes and genocide committed by Bosnian Serb police and military forces in the name of Republika Srpska (RS). Following the war, almost all of the high ranking RS government, police and military officials were convicted of war crimes by the International Criminal Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia in the Hague. The film "Srpska: The Struggle for Freedom" is another attempt at revisionist history, as it seeks to redeem and glorify RS, which was founded on war crimes, genocide and ultranationalism.

The film distorts historical facts by suggesting that Bosnia and the U.S. "opened the gates of conflict" in the Western Balkans in the 1990's, while showing RS as the victim in a "struggle for freedom." Furthermore, the film's narrative attempts to portray the extermination of "Muslims in Bosnia" (i.e., Bosniaks) to make space for Serbs as a morality tale, avenging centuries of perceived injustices at the hands of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires. These falsehoods are a deceitful attempt at "othering" (since Bosniaks are indigenous, European people) and silently introduce radical, revisionist and ultranationalist ideas to Americans across our nation.

Furthermore, as noted above, RS was founded on war crimes, genocide and Serb ultranationalism, which is rampant in the Western Balkans and is slowly spreading across Europe and the rest of the world. It is important to note that Serb ultranationalist ideology inspired the Christchurch shooting in New Zealand, the first ever live streamed mass shooting, which in turn inspired a string of other mass shootings around the world, including the recent Buffalo, New York mass shooting. We are facing unprecedented levels of radicalization in the U.S., as evidenced by the January 6<sup>th</sup> insurrection in the nation's capital. Allowing the screening of this film across the U.S. and Canada poses a potential threat to all of our communities, as well as national security. Many of us who lived through the Bosnian war, and have seen this before, have seen that films such as this are created as propaganda to inspire hatred, radicalization and a new generation of ultranationalists.

Finally, the title "Srpska: The Struggle for Freedom" is highly manipulative and misleading. As already noted, the highest levels of the RS government, including the RS military and police, were convicted of implementing a systemic and systematic program of terror, war crimes, rape and genocide over non-Serb populations in Bosnia, which included Bosniaks, Croats, Jews, Roma and others. Thus, while Mr. Malagurski states that the film "denounces all war crimes that took place in the Bosnian war of the 1990s," the title of his film nevertheless misleadingly attempts to "whitewash" rape, war crimes and genocide and commence revisionist attempts to falsely label such actions as a "struggle for freedom."

Given the above stated facts, we are almost certain that venues in your city have been misled by Mr. Malagurski and his team with respect to the contents of his film. We strongly believe that anyone who is

familiar with the history of RS would never support the screening of this film, as evidenced by the fact that its screening was quickly halted across most of Europe. As such, we urge you to join us and over 35,000 people who have signed an online petition to ban the screening of this controversial film. We call on you to stand on the right side of history, to stand with those who truly struggled for their freedom from oppression in the 1990s and urge for cancellation of the screening of this revisionist and inflammatory propaganda in your city.

Respectfully,



Congress of Bosniaks of North America



The Institute for Research of Genocide Canada



The Working Group for Bosnia and Herzegovina