



**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF
THE REPUBLIC OF SRPSKA**

3. November, 2023

**Senator Jeanne Shaheen
U.S. Senate
506 Hart SOB
Washington, D.C. 20510**

Dear Senator Shaheen,

We write to express our disappointment and regret over your public statements carried today by various media outlets throughout the Western Balkans. Unfortunately, your statements reflect a very skewed understanding of the current situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and in the Western Balkans; and as such will only add fuel to the current political and legal disputes within BiH. preventing greater progress in resolving these disputes and in reaching essential compromises on needed reforms. Not only are you meddling in the internal affairs, political disputes, and the democratic processes within BiH, but you have also clearly chosen a side in these disputes.

While you correctly state that the formation of the Council of Ministers following the last elections in BiH, was completed in record time and that this allowed important decisions and legislation to be passed necessary for eventual EU membership; however, you omit that this was made possible to a large degree, because of the active participation and leadership of President Milorad Dodik and the ruling coalition of parties from the Republic of Srpska. In fact, every positive development with respect to new legislation is only possible with the active support of the legal, legitimate and elected representatives of the Republic of Srpska.

Since the signing of the Dayton Agreement in 1995, there has been a consistent and aggressive attempt to dismantle the guarantees and rights of the Republic of Srpska as provided

for in this agreement which is part of international law. The illegal changes to the Dayton Agreement through the threat and use of force on the part of the OHR, the U.S. and members of the EU have created instability and have pushed BiH into a series of political and constitutional crises. The use of the "Bonn Powers" and the neocolonial attitude and actions by the PIC Steering Committee and by previous High Representatives, as well as the totally illegal and autocratic actions of Christian Schmidt are the greatest challenges to political and constitutional stability in BiH. The utter disregard for international law, the rule of law, the Constitutions of BiH and the Republic of Srpska, as well as the hubris expressed through the use of sanctions and threats against the elected officials and institutions of the Republic of Srpska reflect the hollowness of "Western values" and represent an existential threat to the Republic of Srpska.

The RS President reflects the popular will of the citizens of the Republic of Srpska, repeatedly elected despite serious election interference by outside malignant actors, most recently including Christian Schmidt and U.S. Ambassador Michael Murphy. The citizens of the Republic of Srpska through their elected representatives refuse to sit idly by while their rights are trampled upon by foreign judges, a corrupt foreigner claiming to be some kind of imperial governor and a group of uninspiring and arrogant ambassadors ignoring the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. The National Assembly of the Republic of Srpska has passed a series of decisions binding all elected officials to reject illegal decisions which violate the Dayton Agreement, the Constitution and laws of the Republic of Srpska as well as the fundamental basis of international law. President Dodik in acting in accordance with his legal and constitutional responsibilities and duties has become the focal point for vicious and brutal attacks like yours as expressed in the VOA interview. This has culminated in absurd criminal charges against him, which in themselves violate the constitutions of the Republic of Srpska and of BiH, the laws of our country and of international law (including the Dayton Agreement). Mr. Schmidt, an unelected foreigner, illegally and undemocratically changed the criminal code of BiH in order to protect illegal decisions he has made in violation of international and local law, in order to force obedience and compliance; effectively politicizing the BiH court and prosecutor; in order to silence and remove from office an elected high official, acting in full compliance of his constitutional and legally defined authority. This is the extent of the absurdity, illegality and irrational animosity confronting President Dodik and all other elected officials of the Republic of Srpska.

Senator Shaheen, we are sure that you understand that democracy cannot be imposed through repression, sanctions or the use of force. In fact, U.S. foreign policy over the last three decades has unfortunately confirmed this truth through a series of failures from Iraq to the Western Balkans. Likewise, loyalty or love of a state cannot be imposed through threats, violence, sanctions or repression; they must be earned. If BiH is to survive, it will do so through negotiations and agreements made by the legal and legitimate leaders of the three constituent peoples and the citizens of this joint state. If a lack of will exists for compromise or agreement, then it is normal that a peaceful alternative would be a divorce like that between Serbia and Montenegro, which your own country facilitated and supported.

We hope that you will reconsider your engagement in our internal affairs and that you will commit yourself to doing nothing that worsens an already bad situation in BiH. We welcome constructive support for negotiated settlements of all outstanding disputes, but we decisively reject any outside interference, threats or actions that violate the Dayton Agreement, international law, our constitution(s) and laws. We are open to dialogue on any issue, but please do not doubt or underestimate our resolve in this existential struggle for our rights and for the Republic of Srpska.

Sincerely,

Leadership of the Republic of Srpska National Assembly:

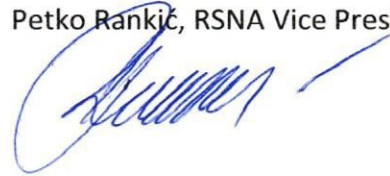
Nenad Stevandić, RSNA President



Anja Ljubojević, RSNA Vice President

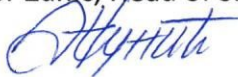


Petko Rankić, RSNA Vice President



The Heads of Parliamentary Caucuses:

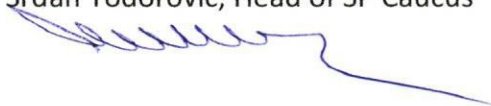
Igor Žunić, Head of SNSD Caucus



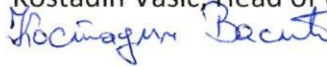
Spomenka Stevanović, Head of DEMOS Caucus



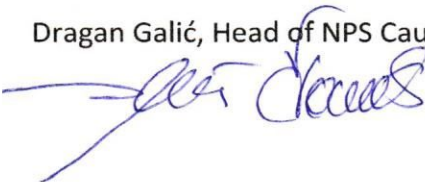
Srđan Todorović, Head of SP Caucus



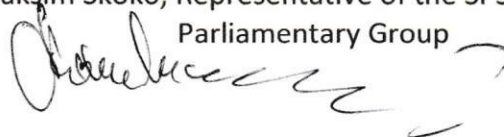
Kostadin Vasić, Head of US Caucus



Dragan Galić, Head of NPS Caucus



Maksim Skoko, Representative of the SPS
Parliamentary Group



Predrag Nešić, Representative of the DNS Parliamentary Group

