

Working Group for Bosnia and Herzegovina

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Dr. Gene C. Crume Jr.
President
Judson University
1151 N. State St.
Elgin, IL 60123

Dear President Crume,

We are writing regarding your plan to welcome Milorad Dodik as the featured guest of the April 30, 2026 World Leaders Forum, “Standing Up for Democracy,” and to confer upon him the inaugural “Leadership and Standing Up for Democracy Award.”

This decision raises serious concerns.

Mr. Dodik’s public record reflects a sustained effort to undermine the sovereignty and constitutional order of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). He has repeatedly characterized the country as a “failed” or “impossible state” and advocated for the secession of Republika Srpska.

He has also consistently denied the Srebrenica genocide, an event legally established by both the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and the International Court of Justice — and has rejected rulings of BiH’s Constitutional Court.

This concern is not about restricting dialogue. Universities play a central role in hosting diverse viewpoints. However, hosting a speaker is distinct from conferring recognition, particularly in the context of a formal award and a public, ticketed institutional event involving students, community members, and sponsors. Honoring an individual whose public record includes genocide denial and rejection of judicial authority raises questions about the standards of leadership being endorsed. Mr. Dodik has also opposed BiH’s Euro-Atlantic integration and has been subject to sanctions by the U.S. Department of the Treasury.

We are concerned about the message this recognition sends to students, faculty, and the broader community regarding the standards of leadership and democratic values the University seeks to uphold. Mr. Dodik’s record stands in direct contradiction to the principles reflected in the theme “Standing Up for Democracy.”

We respectfully urge the University to reconsider both the invitation and any associated recognition.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

The Working Group for Bosnia and Herzegovina
Board of Directors

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