



THE CENTRE FOR SOCIO-POLITICAL RESEARCH OF THE REPUBLIC OF SRPSKA



**THE GENESIS
OF MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD
AND RADICAL ISLAM
IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA**

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Banja Luka, 2024

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Editor's Foreword

The phenomenon of radicalization among adherents of traditional Islam in the 20th and 21st centuries is multifaceted, with a range of causes and models varying with geographical location and historical context. Its origins can be traced back to the colonial policies of Western European powers, the era of Nazism, and ultimately to the instrumentalization of Islam adherents by the states within the Western political sphere.

Radicalized strains of Islam invariably, or nearly always, first target adherents of traditional Islam, subsequently extending their influence beyond national borders.

The ideology and organizational structure of the Muslim Brotherhood stands for their complexity and multi-level organizational structure. Understanding the initial phase of its operations, termed 'civilization jihad', as well as the concept of *taqiyya* inherent in this phase, is paramount.

This concise analysis of the emergence, evolution, and activities of Muslim Brotherhood structures in Bosnia and Herzegovina aims to shed light on why these entities undermine stability and the fortification of democratic institutions in the region.

For many well-versed in this matter, it is evident that today the Republic of Srpska stands as a bastion of security and prosperity not only for Serbs west of the Drina River but also for adherents of traditional Islam and all other citizens.

Dušan Pavlović
Director, Public Institution Center for Socio-Political Research
of the Republic of Srpska

THE GENESIS OF THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD AND RADICAL ISLAM IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

1. From Istanbul to Cairo

Istanbul. The year is 1923. The vibrant metropolis, a crossroads of cultures and ideas, is still the epicenter of the pursuit for Islamic theological education. There, amidst the historic mosques and lively bazaars, the future of Islamic scholarship appears bright and boundless. The bustling streets of Istanbul stand as a beacon for Bosnian Muslim students among a vast array of scholars, as Turkey is the wellspring and core of their religious, cultural and political identity.

Yet, that year also bore witness to a pivotal turning point under the leadership of Kemal Ataturk. With the proclamation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923 and subsequent reforms, Ataturk embarked on a radical transformation of Turkish society. Among these changes was the formal abolition of the Caliphate as the Islamic form of government and prohibition of religious schools in Turkey, emblematic of Ataturk's sweeping secularization efforts. The closure of these institutions not only signaled a disruption in the centuries-old practice of Bosnian Muslims traveling to Istanbul for religious studies, but also reflected a broader clash between modernization and tradition within the Turkish society - a dichotomy that persists to this day.

However, the closure of these educational avenues compelled first Bosnian scholars and then religious leaders to seek alternatives. Their gaze turned to Cairo, the capital of Egypt and its renowned Al-Azhar University. Considering that Cairo would afford the knowledge that they used to get in Istanbul, they went there in the period between two world wars (1918-1941), where three generations of students completed the studies at the prestigious school of Al-Azhar University.

Recognized as the third oldest Islamic institution globally, Al-Azhar had stood as a beacon of Islamic scholarship since its founding in 970 AD. Within its venerable halls, generations had delved into the intricacies of Islamic law, theology, and the Arabic language.

This University also nurtured professors and students whose ideologies resonated with the principles of the Muslim Brotherhood movement. Founded in 1928 by Hassan al-Banna, this movement emerged as a potent political and religious movement in Egypt, advocating for Islamic principles and governance. Indeed, this very concept formed the foundational root of all present-day radical Islamist ideologies and structures, including Al-Qaeda, ISIS, Hamas, and others. The activities of this organization drew attention from various quarters, and given its ideas and influence in Cairo, Muslim students from the territory of present-day Bosnia and Herzegovina at Al-Azhar during the early to mid-20th century were exposed to its influence.

2. Bosnian Muslims at crossroads between Pan-Islamism and Third Reich

In the formative years of Islamic thought among Bosnian Muslims, a particular group of scholars emerged from the first generation of students with significant influence, including figures like Alija Aganović, Mehmed Handžić, Kasim Dobrača, Akif Handžić, and others. Their affiliations were deeply rooted in the organization El-Hidaya and through various roles within the Islamic community. This period coincided with the turbulent era of the fascist regime in the Independent State of Croatia (NDH) and the subsequent formation of Yugoslavia. From the 1930s onwards, young Muslim scholars started returning from their studies in Egypt, bringing with them the ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Alija Aganović, an alumnus of Al Azhar University, played a controversial role at the onset of World War II, mobilizing the Muslim populace into the Ustasha military ranks. Advocating for the autonomy of Bosnia and Herzegovina, he sought patronage from German authorities in the puppet Independent State of Croatia (NDH), aiming to strengthen the Third Reich's presence in the Balkans. Notably, the fact that Aganović presided over the Islamic community during the inauguration of Pavelić's mosque in Zagreb on August 18, 1944 further corroborates his close ties with the Ustasha movement.



Photograph 1. Effendi Alija Aganović with Ante Pavelić at the opening of the Poglavnik's Mosque in Zagreb, 1944.

Akif Handžić, also educated in Cairo, enlisted in Jure Francetić's 'Black Legion' by late 1941, serving as its mufti. By October 1942, his responsibilities expanded, with him assuming the role of mufti for Ustasha soldiers and earning additional accolades within their ranks. Renowned for his steadfast support of the Ustasha cause and the NDH, Handžić was instrumental in recruiting Muslim refugees from eastern Bosnia into the SS Ustasha divisions, showcasing his allegiance to the regime.



Photograph 2. Effendi Akif Handžić with Ante Pavelić at the opening of the Poglavnik's Mosque in Zagreb, 1944.

His ideologies resonated deeply with Heinrich Himmler, who, in 1943, proposed to Hitler the formation of a unique SS unit comprised of Muslims from present-day Bosnia and Herzegovina. Hitler approved this proposal, leading to the establishment of the 13th Mountain SS Division Handschar, notorious for committing grave atrocities against Serbs, Jews, and Roma. Following this blueprint, the SS 'Skanderbeg Division' was formed in Kosovo and Metohija, tasked with resolving the Serbian and Jewish problem in the region. The SS Handschar unit enjoyed protection not only from local Muslim and Ustasha structures but also direct support from the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Amin al-Husseini.



Photograph 3. Karl Gustav Zauberweig, commander of the 13th Waffen Mountain Division of the SS 'Handschar', giving the Nazi salute to the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Amin al-Husseini, in Sarajevo, 1943

In March and April 1943, Himmler, along with a group of Muslim leaders within the Independent State of Croatia (NDH), sought assistance from Amin al-Husseini, then residing in Berlin, to organize and recruit Muslims into German SS and other units. From March 30 to April 10, the Grand Mufti visited Zagreb, Sarajevo, and Banja Luka, where he met with senior Muslim leaders to rally support for the new SS 'Handschar' division.



Photograph 4. Grand Mufti Amin al-Husseini giving the Nazi salute to soldiers of the 'Handschar' Division in Sarajevo, 1943.

One of the notable figures within the Handschar Division and its principal mufti was another Al-Azhar University graduate, albeit from a later cohort. Alongside the Palestinian Al-Husseini, ‘Al-Husseini of Bosnia and Herzegovina’ - Husein Đozo volunteered to assume the position of the Division’s chief imam.



Photograph 5. Second from left to right: Husein effendi Đozo, ‘Huseini of Bosnia and Herzegovina’, the chief imam of the 13th Waffen Mountain Division of the SS ‘Handschar’ with the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem Amin al-Husseini, Sarajevo 1943.

Educated at Al-Azhar University in Cairo, Đozo specialized in Islamic theology and Sharia law. He frequently extolled the operations of the SS, vehemently criticized capitalism, communism, and Judaism, and advocated for the establishment of a ‘new order’ in alignment with Nazi propaganda. His writings and speeches resounded with calls ‘to sacrifice our lives for the great Führer Adolf Hitler and for the new Europe’.

To comprehend the role of imams within the 13th SS Division, it is imperative to examine their individual trajectories before and after joining the SS. The initial group of approximately 15 imams recruited during the Division’s inception in 1943 was born between 1912 and 1919, making them between 24 and 31 years old in 1943. Only the Division’s first imam, Abdulah Muhasilović, was significantly older, having been born in 1898. This inaugural ‘cohort’ of SS imams boasted a relatively high level of education, primarily stemming from the Gazi Husrev-beg Madrasa and the Higher Islamic School for Sharia Law and Theology in Sarajevo. Moreover, Husein Đozo and Haris Korkut pursued their studies at Al-Azhar University in Cairo. Đozo was found guilty of collaborating with the Nazis, leading to his imprisonment by Yugoslav communist authorities.

However, he received clemency in 1950 and was subsequently released. Later, he assumed the presidency of the Union of Imams of Bosnia and even served as an interpreter for Josip Broz Tito during his official visits to Arab nations.

He garnered renown as a preeminent Muslim scholar, and established Islamic publications. In October 1968, at the Fourth Islamic Conference convened in Cairo post the Six-Day War, Đozo reunited with Al-Husseini, who had journeyed from Lebanon, alongside the head of his office, Haris Korkut - another imam who had served in the Handschar Division. Đozo pledged 'on behalf of Muslims in Yugoslavia' to furnish volunteers and contributions for the triumph of jihad in the Middle East, voicing support for the mufti's call to arms against Israel.

However, it was Mehmed Handžić who emerged as the most distinguished among his peers. His tenure at Al-Azhar University in Cairo was marked by academic distinction and notable civic engagement. He was particularly influenced by his mentor Abdu Aziz al-Jawish, a key figure in founding El Hidaje and the Young Muslims association in Egypt. Bringing his teachings and experiences back to Sarajevo, Handžić founded the Association of Muslim Youth and launched the publication of the eponymous magazine El Hidaje. Within this association, he established a youth wing known as the Young Muslims, thus contributing to the Islamic understanding within Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Within this cohort of students, some were directly involved in the activities of the Ustasha movement, while others, arguably more moderate, such as Mehmed Handžić, were instrumental in promulgating the seminal Sarajevo Resolution. This resolution denounced the persecution of Serbs, Roma, and Jews within the Independent State of Croatia (NDH) - an argument often invoked by contemporary Muslim political elites to refute allegations of collaboration with the Ustasha. Nevertheless, the situation remains profoundly intricate and unresolved, given the documented collaboration of certain signatories, including Alija Aganović (17th signature), Husein Đozo (49th signature), and Akif Handžić (50th signature), with the Ustasha.

Of interest is a meeting held on August 7, 1941, two months preceding the Sarajevo Resolution, wherein a delegation of Sarajevo ulama, led by Ademaga Mešić, Hakija Hadžić, Mehmed Handžić, and others, convened with Ante Pavelić regarding the construction of a mosque in Zagreb. This encounter suggests more cordial relations with Pavelić, raising doubts about the motivations behind the subsequent condemnation of atrocities. Additionally, Handžić's appointment of Pavelić as a lecturer at the Higher Islamic Sharia School in Sarajevo further complicates the narrative surrounding the Sarajevo Resolution and calls into question the sincerity of its signatories.



Photograph 6. Meeting of Islamic religious leadership from the territory of present-day Bosnia and Herzegovina with Pavelić in Zagreb: 1. Hakija Hadžić, 2. Kasim Dobrača, 3. Hasan Odžekčić, 4. Erik Lisak, 5. Slavko Kvaternik, 6. Mehmed Handžić, 7. Šaćir Masihović, 8. dr Ante Pavelić, 9. Ademaga Mešić, 10. Atif Hadžikadić, 11. Muhamed Pandža, 12. Mirko Puk.

In 1943, Kasim ef. Dobrača, another Al-Azhar graduate, assumed the presidency of the Young Muslims, playing a pivotal role among the Islamic clergy. He served as the official interpreter during Amin al-Husseini's visit to Begova Mosque in Sarajevo. Dobrača took over the presidency following the death of Mehmed Handžić, the president of El Hidaje in July 1944, continuing to champion the mission of nurturing Islamic values and education despite the challenges of the time. Operating as a branch of El Hidaje, an organization within the Islamic clergy of the Independent State of Croatia, the Young Muslims had Mustafa Busuladžić as their official president in Sarajevo after Kasim Dobrača, following the recommendation of Mehmed Handžić. In August 1942, the Sarajevo magazine 'Osvit' published a favorable portrayal of Jerusalem's Grand Mufti Husseini, based on an interview conducted in Rome by Mustafa Busuladžić. Expressing profound admiration and respect, Busuladžić likened Husseini to esteemed Islamic intellectuals such as Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani and Muhammad Abduh. Busuladžić was executed on June 29, 1945, along with others convicted of collaboration with the Nazis.

Alija Izetbegović, a founding member of the Young Muslims and later the first president of independent Bosnia and Herzegovina, was arrested in

1946 for attempting to revive the organization post-WW II and sentenced to three years in prison. Upon Izetbegović's arrest, Halid Kajmaz succeeded him but was sentenced to death and executed in October 1949. Izetbegović later acknowledged that his earlier prison sentence had spared his life.

3. Muslim Brotherhood and Islamic Declaration

In the post-war era, numerous members of the Young Muslims and El Hidaje, essentially part of the same intellectual circle, faced convictions, leading to the near-collapse of these organizations. However, some remaining members persistently continued, discreetly upholding their ideals. Around the 1970s, amid increased student exchanges with Islamic countries through Yugoslavia's membership in the Non-Aligned Movement, connections among surviving members were revitalized. In 1964, a group of Sudanese students, including dentistry student El Fatih Hasanien, a member of the Young Muslims and the Muslim Brotherhood in Sudan, arrived in Belgrade. Sudan's proximity to Egypt made it fertile ground for Islamic organizations like the Muslim Brotherhood, which was founded there in 1954.



Photograph 7. Photographed in 1984, with Anwar Ibrahim, the current Prime Minister of Malaysia. During the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ibrahim served as the Minister of Finance in Malaysia and supported the Muslims. Khartoum, 1984.

Hasanien's visit to Sarajevo in the 1970s sparked significant interest in reconnecting with members of the Young Muslims from Bosnia and Herzegovina, including Husein Đozo and Kasim Dobrača. Despite initial resistance from other members, only Alija Izetbegović embraced Hasanien's idea of collaboration under a unified organization, leading to the initial translation of Islamic books from Arabic and English. This collaboration marked a revival of their shared ideals, demonstrating the enduring influence and resilience of their Islamic beliefs and connections amidst growing political and social upheavals.

During this period, Alija Izetbegović was already working on his seminal work, the Islamic Declaration. In 1977, El Fatih Hasanien took his manuscript to London for editing, review, and printing facilitated by the Muslim Brotherhood structure. Hasanien, who had previously facilitated Izetbegović's visit to London, also organized a trip for a group of Muslims to Germany and England to further connect with Islamic organizations and the Muslim Brotherhood.

The publication of the Islamic Declaration, articulating the principles of fundamental Islamism through pan-Islamism, became a turning point. In the early hours of March 23, 1983, authorities of the Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina arrested Alija Izetbegović, a retired lawyer, along with Omer Behmen, a civil engineer, Edhem Bičakčić, a retired economist, Mustafa Spahić, an imam from Vogošća, and Melika Salihbegović, a writer. In the following days, dozens of Muslims were arrested and interrogated. Some were granted witness status upon interrogation, while others were indicted and imprisoned. Among the accused, alongside those apprehended on the first day of the Sarajevo trial, were Hasan Čengić (at the time, the mufti in Stolac, who was later blacklisted by the United States for terrorist activities related to money laundering through the TWRA), his sister Đula Bičakčić (a civil servant), Džemaludin Latić (a professor at Gazi Husrev-beg's Madrasa), and Derviš Đurđević (a lawyer). This led to the initiation of the Sarajevo Trial. The charges included the book, their fundamentalist ideology, and a trip to Iran in January 1983. The trial concluded with a verdict of guilt for attempting to undermine the constitutional order, resulting in a collective sentence of 89.5 years in prison, with Izetbegović receiving 14 years.



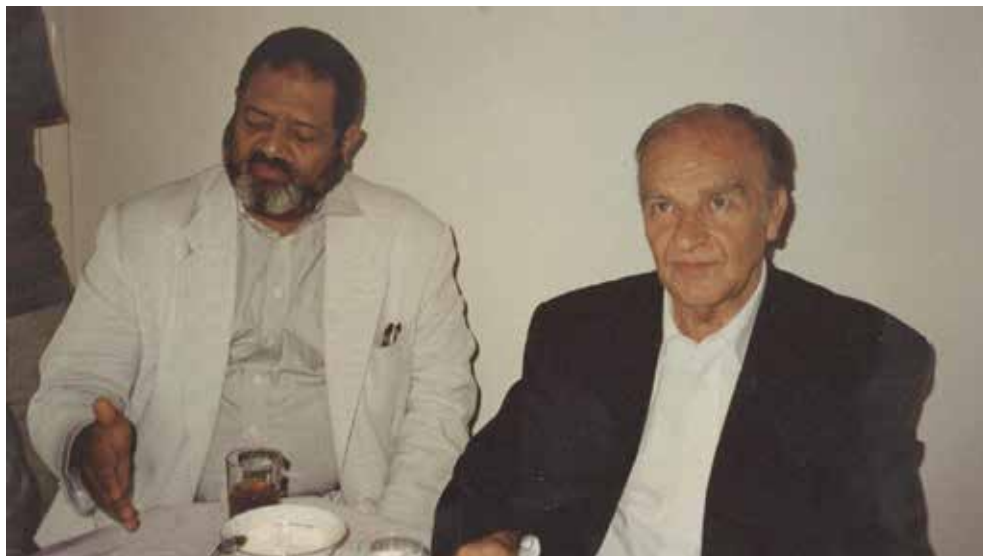
Photograph 8. Courthouse, Sarajevo Trial, 1983.

The Sarajevo Trial also brought to light Izetbegović's close friendship with Hasanien. Despite the verdict, Izetbegović fought to appeal, citing legal irregularities in the trial at the Federal Court of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The Supreme Court of the Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina reduced the sentence to 12 years, and following an appeal to the Federal Court of the SFRY, the sentence was further reduced to nine years for a 'verbal delict', a charge that was removed from the criminal code soon thereafter. Izetbegović ultimately served five years and eight months, being released on November 25, 1988.

In 1990, Alija Izetbegović republished his book *Islamic Declaration*, without altering its content. This document, marked by ideological alignment with the Muslim Brotherhood and pan-Islamism, became the foundational political manifesto of the Party of Democratic Action (SDA). Established as the first political party in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the SDA embraced this declaration as its official platform.

4. Alija 's bagman for jihad in Bosnia and Herzegovina and ideological continuity

In the year preceding Alija Izetbegović's release from prison in 1987, El Fatih Hasanien and his brother Sukarno founded the Third World Relief Agency (TWRA) in Vienna. This organization played a crucial role in mobilizing support for Bosnian Muslims, with significant backing from the Muslim Brotherhood. Under El Fatih Hasanien's leadership and with the strategic involvement of Hasan Abdullah Turabi, a prominent figure within the Muslim Brotherhood and the dean of the School of Law at the University of Khartoum, TWRA facilitated crucial support and coordination efforts. This included arranging meetings between Alija Izetbegović and Dr. Turabi, thereby bolstering international support networks for Bosnian Muslims.



Photograph 9. El Fatih Hasanien and Alija Izetbegović

In May 1990, shortly after his release from prison, Izetbegović, along with leading members of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Young Muslims organization, founded the Party of Democratic Action (SDA). Aligned with the doctrine of this ideology and political Islam, they nominally advocated for democracy and universal values at that time. According to this doctrine, this stance is to persist until Muslims become the majority in a given society and state, at which point they would transition to the doctrine of 'civilizational jihad' and the idea of establishing Sharia law. Immediately after its establishment,

the SDA began making statements regarding the rehabilitation of Mustafa Busuladžić.

Following the war in BiH, in 1995, the SDA launched numerous initiatives, resulting in streets and schools being named after proven Nazi collaborators and operatives of the Muslim Brotherhood, such as Husein Đozo and Mustafa Busuladžić. One of the longest streets in Sarajevo was named Path of Young Muslims (Put Mladih muslimana).

It is noteworthy that Alija Izetbegović often took his son Bakir, who later became a member of the Presidency of BiH and is currently the president of the SDA, to meetings with El Fatih Hasanien. In 2014, Bakir Izetbegović welcomed a delegation from the Muslim Brotherhood at the Presidency of BiH, where the now-famous photograph with their four-finger salute was taken.



Photograph 10. Bakir Izetbegović at the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina alongside a delegation from the Muslim Brotherhood

Another prominent member of the SDA with ties to the Muslim Brotherhood is Bisera Turković, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina. A fortnight before her appointment as minister in 2019, she visited the jihadist cleric and spiritual leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, Yusuf al-Qaradawi, who also supported the arrival of mujahideen during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. During the war, Bisera Turković served as Bosnia and Herzegovina's ambassador to Zagreb, closely collaborating with TWRA officials on sponsoring terrorism and money laundering.



Photograph 11. Bisera Turković with Yusuf al-Qaradawi, Doha, 2019.

Through his leadership in TWRA, El Fatih Hasanien became a key figure in bankrolling the Muslim Brotherhood in Bosnia and Herzegovina, facilitating the delivery of weapons, humanitarian aid, and the transportation of mujahideen fighters. Referred to as Izetbegović's 'finance minister', Hasanien's efforts included interactions with Osama bin Laden's associates to raise funds. A bank account in Vienna served as a channel for approximately \$350 million destined for Muslims in the Bosnian war. This strategy, dubbed by US investigators as the 'Bosnian model' of Al-Qaeda bankrolling, involved disguising funds for weapons as humanitarian aid to make transactions appear legitimate. While some have compared Fatiha al-Hasanien's role in jihad in Bosnia and Herzegovina to the dubious role of Amin al-Husseini, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, in the Balkans during World War II, it is perhaps most accurate to attribute to the Sudanese the nickname bestowed upon him by Western investigators – 'Alija's bagman'.

Official cooperation between TWRA and Izetbegović's government began in the second half of 1992 with the opening of branches in Sarajevo, Budapest, Moscow, and Istanbul. This expansion allowed for a significant support network for the government. Additionally, in March 1992, Hasanien was granted a diplomatic passport and appointed cultural attaché at the Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Vienna, enabling him to transport funds to Slovenia and Croatia without police intervention or oversight. This role significantly enhanced his ability to support Muslims without logistical or legal hindrances.

In October 1992, Haris Silajdžić, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, visited Vienna to secure a guarantee from Die Erste Bank for TWRA. This led to the opening of a bank account, with El Fatih Hasanien recognized as the authorized representative of the Bosnian government. This arrangement was later acknowledged by Alija Izetbegović. Austrian investigators discovered that approximately \$350 million flowed through this account from 1992 to 1995, sent by the governments of Islamic countries and radical Islamic movements. Among the donors was Osama bin Laden, who lived in Sudan until the mid-1990s. According to intelligence reports, he, along with other global Islamic terrorists, received a passport and citizenship of Bosnia and Herzegovina, issued at the Embassy of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Vienna, as reported by the Austrian daily newspaper 'Österreich'. These claims were refuted in 2001 by the then-President of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Zlatko Lagumdžija, who denied allegations of Bin Laden visiting Bosnia and Herzegovina during the war. Lagumdžija himself was part of Izetbegović's office during the war and served as Deputy Prime Minister from 1992 to 1993.

Investigators also established a connection between TWRA and the blind sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman, who was sentenced to life imprisonment in the United States in 1993 for planning the bombing of the World Trade Center.

0328-4456

VEREIN ZUR UNTERSTÜTZUNG DER "DRITTEN WELT"
THIRD WORLD RELIEF AGENCY



A-1040 WIEN, PRINZ EUGEN-STRASSE 36/4/2
VIENNA - AUSTRIA

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

إیصال إستلام

أقر أنا الموقع أدناه شعیب شایب

قد إستلمت مبلغ وقدره « 500,000 » خمسمائة ألفی دولار
امریکی من
من الدكتور الفاتح علي حسنین المسئول عن مكتب النمسا وشرق أوروبا وذلك عن
وهذا مني للإعتبار -

الإسم : ŠETA ŠUAJB

التوقيع : Fatih Tugaj

التاريخ : 20.04.1995.

POTVRDA

kojom se potvrđuje da je ŠETA ŠUAJB preuzeo
od dr FATIH EL HASANEINA preko SUKARNA iznos
od 500.000. USD (pet stotina hiljada amer. dolara)
u svoju predaju istih HASANU ČENGIĆU.

NOVAC PREDAO: Fatih Tugaj PRISUTAN: SUKARNI MEYUDIN ČENGIĆ

ERSTE ÖSTERREICHISCHE SPAR-CASSE BANK WIEN, AUSTRIA - BLZ 20111 KONTO NO. 00465151

Photograph 12. Confirmation of receipt of \$500,000 from Shatea Shuaib, a Muslim operative. The funds are to be transferred to Hasan Čengić by Sukarno Hasanien, El Fatih's brother. Vienna, 1993

Hasanien skillfully used his connections with Sarajevo and Khartoum to support jihad in the Balkans. He held a diplomatic passport from Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as a Sudanese diplomatic passport, and Izetbegović requested that foreign governments treat the Sudanese as a senior official of the Sarajevo government. Every Sunday during the war, TWRA forwarded between 3 and 5 million US dollars, usually in cash, to SDA officials in Vienna and Zagreb. Mostly on Sundays, Hasanien would drive from Vienna to Zagreb with suitcases full of money packed in the trunk of a car with Sudanese diplomatic plates, handing them to representatives from Sarajevo. The amounts of money passing through TWRA were enormous. In 1994 alone, a shipment weighing over 2000 kg, filled with US dollars earmarked for TWRA, arrived at Vienna Airport. Funds totaling nearly \$50 million were collected as part of a special Ramadan collection for Bosnia and Herzegovina, deposited into TWRA's account at Die Erste Bank, and then handed over to SDA officials.

Sl. No.	Date	AMOUNT	REMARKS
41	05. 07. 1993	350 000	
42	23. 07. 1993	400 000	
43	04. 08. 1993	030 000	
44	17. 08. 1993		
45	29. 08. 1993	005 000	
46	26. 12. 1993	61 000 000	

THIRD WORLD BELIEF AGENCY
 HANE: HASAN ČENGIĆ
 وكالة امداد العالم الثالث
 هانسان چنجيچ

REMARKS: (Arabic text)
 Union Bank
 For Mr. Ahmed Pakizovic
 For Patrick Pichler
 For Patrick Pichler
 BANK ALI SHARIQ FOR HASAN - DEPOSIT STAMP

Photograph 13. Another document from TWRA detailing monetary transactions. Addressed to Hasan Čengiċ.

The TWRA board included prominent figures from the Party of Democratic Action (SDA), such as Hasan Čengiċ, Husein Živalj (then Ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina to Vienna), and Irfan Ljevaković. Austrian authorities considered Ljevaković a key intermediary for the entry of Islamic fighters into Bosnia and Herzegovina as humanitarian workers. Following the Dayton Agreement, he allegedly helped these fighters from Islamic countries stay in Bosnia and Herzegovina as a senior official in the Muslim intelligence Agency for Information and Documentation (AID), primarily composed of Bosniaks. The involvement of high-ranking SDA members and government officials with TWRA demonstrates the complex network of political, financial, and military support systems established during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina,

a product of blending humanitarian aid with more controversial support for military efforts and the integration of foreign fighters into the conflict. After Austrian authorities launched a money laundering investigation in 1994, Hasanien was forced to flee, seeking refuge in Istanbul with his close friend Erdogan.



Photograph 14. Hasanien, Erdogan and Alija Izetbegović

5. Jihad and foreign fighters in Bosnia and Herzegovina

In response to the influx of foreign fighters, the government officially established the El Mujahid detachment on August 13, 1993. The number of Islamic combatants who arrived in Bosnia and Herzegovina varied, with estimates ranging up to several thousand. Ali Hamad, a Bahraini national who testified at the trial of Rasim Delić, former commander of the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina (ABiH), claimed he had arrived in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1992 to join the jihad against Serbian and Croatian forces. During his testimony at The Hague, Hamad disclosed that some fighters were affiliated with Al-Qaeda and had come with the intention of establishing a base for expanding their operations.



Photograph 15. Foreign fighters of the 'El Mujahid' unit after the massacre of Serbs in 1995.

The Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (ARBiH) essentially functioned as the military wing of the global Muslim Brotherhood organization in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with 99% of its members being Muslims. Throughout the war, the 7th Muslim Brigade served as the flagship military unit of the Muslim Brotherhood in Bosnia and Herzegovina, comprising both foreign and local mujahideen.

Presently, the commanding officers of this brigade hold prominent positions within the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Former brigade commander Senad Mašović recently served as the chief of staff of the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Other members of the ARBiH, deemed suitable for further education, were sent to Islamic countries for theological studies following the conclusion of the war in 1995. Upon completing their studies, they returned to serve as educators and religious leaders in Western Europe. The presence of foreign mujahideen fighters in Bosnia and Herzegovina, alongside local Islamist-mujahideen fighters, resulted in numerous and severe atrocities against Serbs and Croats, including ritualistic killings and decapitations of prisoners of war, reminiscent of tactics later associated with ISIS.

One such instance was the beheading of Blagoje Blagojević, a Serbian captive in central Bosnia in 1992. A photograph of a French Mujahideen fighter holding Blagojević's severed head highlighted the barbaric actions employed by some foreign combatants during the conflict.

Christophe Caze, initially brought up in the Catholic faith, arrived in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1992 while pursuing his medical studies to gain practical experience at a hospital in Zenica. During his time there, he embraced Islam and enlisted with the El Mujahid detachment. Over time, he radicalized, reportedly participating in gruesome acts such as playing football with the severed heads of Serb victims.

Abu Hamza al-Masri, a Bosnian mujahideen, served as the spiritual mentor to Christophe Caze. Upon returning to France, he adopted a radical Islamist ideology and assumed leadership of a GIA faction in Roubaix known as the 'Gang de Roubaix'. This group orchestrated a series of criminal activities, including bank robberies, armored vehicle heists, and supermarket raids, employing weaponry such as machine guns and grenade launchers.



Photograph 16. Christophe Caze with the severed head of Serbian captive Blagoje Blagojević

Another French jihadist who traveled to Bosnia and Herzegovina was Lionel Dimon, who enlisted with the foreign mujahideen. Born in 1971, Dimon is a former French soldier now serving a 25-year prison term in France. His conversion to Islam occurred following his deployment with peacekeeping forces in Somalia.

Following the war, the El Mujahid detachment was disbanded, but many former fighters remained in the country, obtaining citizenship based on their service in the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina. According to media reports, over 741 individuals associated with the Mujahideen were granted citizenship

post-war. They formed their communities, typically in rural areas, where they propagated their interpretations of Islam. American scholar Leslie Lebl, who researched Islamism and security in Bosnia and Herzegovina, believes that the sole purpose of the Mujahideen's arrival during the war was to promote Wahhabi Islam in Europe:

'Saudis wanted to spread Wahhabism and that is why they funded the Mujahideen and that continued after the war. You could see all of a sudden, mosques were being built which were huge and they had no relation in size and style to the ones you normally see in Bosnia; this is all intentional and deliberate,' Lebl said.

Lebl contends that the issue lies in the fact that some Bosniak leaders and clerics have ties to Islamists and support Wahhabis.

6. Conclusion

The trajectory from Islamic academia at Al-Azhar University in Cairo to political and military involvement in Bosnia and Herzegovina traces a complex interplay of ideas, movements, and individuals. Hasan al-Banna, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, exerted significant influence on Mehmed Handžić and other Muslim students at Al-Azhar University. Upon his return to Sarajevo, Handžić disseminated the principles he had imbibed, playing a pivotal role in propagating Islamic teachings through the organization El Hidayah and its youth wing, the Young Muslims.

During the era of the former Yugoslavia, El Fatih Hasanien, associated with the Muslim Brotherhood and essentially acting as their agent, commenced collaboration with the remaining Young Muslims, alongside Alija Izetbegović, the progenitor of the Party of Democratic Action (SDA), the inaugural president of an independent Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the author of the Islamic Declaration. This collaboration culminated in the establishment of TWRA, alongside the formation of the political entity SDA. Consequently, Bosnia and Herzegovina, during and post-war, emerged as a hub of modern jihad, deeply intertwined with extremist networks.

Alija Izetbegović often found himself at odds with senior members of El Hidayah and the broader Islamic clergy due to his inconsistency. In his seminal work, Islamic Declaration, Izetbegović penned a passage encapsulating his personal ethos:

‘At its core, Islam is irreconcilable with non-Islamic systems. Coexistence between Islamic faith and non-Islamic social and political structures is untenable. The dysfunctionality of such systems and the inherent instability of regimes in Muslim nations, characterized by frequent upheavals and coups, largely stem from their *a priori* opposition to Islam - the primary ideological underpinning of the populace in these regions. By asserting Islam’s sovereignty over its domain, the religion inherently precludes the legitimacy or influence of any secular ideology within its realm. Consequently, secular principles find no footing, with the state mandated to uphold and reflect religious moral precepts.’

(...)

‘We must, therefore, be first preachers, and then soldiers. Our weapons are personal example, books, and words. When does force join these? The choice of this moment is always tangible and depends on a number of factors. However, there is a general rule: the Islamic movement should and can begin to seize power as soon as it is morally and numerically strong enough not only to overthrow the existing non-Islamic government but also to build a new Islamic one. This difference is important because overthrowing and building do not require the same degree of psychological and material readiness.’

In the plans of the Muslim Brotherhood, Bosnia and Herzegovina, being a European territory, must become an Islamic state to facilitate Islam’s faster integration into the authentic and legitimate part of European cultural identity during the ‘civilization jihad’ phase in Western Europe.

The modus operandi applied by the structures of the Muslim Brotherhood in Western Europe during the ‘civilization jihad’ phase (through culture, education, economy, and politics) is recognized as the same strategy applied before and at the beginning of the civil war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. According to the Muslim Brotherhood’s strategy, the ‘civilization jihad’ also includes the ‘settling concept,’ which consists of several phases:

- 1) Settlement: ‘For Islam and its movement to become part of the land they intend to settle in.’
- 2) Establishment: ‘For Islam to transform into firmly rooted organizations upon which the Islamic civilization, structure, and faith would be built.’
- 3) Stability: ‘For Islam to become stable in the land where its people move, to become a permanent characteristic of the country, and no longer be the religion of immigrants.’
- 4) Naturalization: ‘For Islam to become indigenous within the souls, minds, and lives of the people of the country where that people move,’ i.e., to cease

being a foreign religion imported into the country but to become an integral part of it.

- 5) Rooting in: 'For Islam to exist and not be a passing episode, to be rooted and 'fortified' where it is and not be an unknown plant in that soil'.

To the uninformed observer, these plans may seem innocuous, and everyone seeks their place in the sun. However, the Muslim Brotherhood believes that alongside radical Islamist structures, there should be no other human law or institution above the divine law, i.e., Sharia.

The realization of this ideological and political platform of the Muslim Brotherhood is best understood through a case study of the destruction of the historical Serbian Christian community in the Muslim part of Sarajevo in the 1990s (Source: www.incomfis-sarajevo.org/mapping/).

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