

BOSNIA AND BOSNIACS (past, present, and perspectives)

The issue of the relations between Bosnia and Bosniacs has to be considered from several aspects of those relations. First of them is the continuity of the name *Bosnia* and all the related names. Our science has not reliably identified the origin of the name of the state Bosnia, though that onomatology research and the topo-onomatology as its discipline approached the solution of this complex issue. In any case, this name is local and it emerged among its citizens who lived in the areas later known as Bosnia, which name will later on be used in the highest-level international documents as the marking for this state. But, there is no need to engage in the matter of etymology on the origin of the name, and instead it is necessary to consider the scientific facts which serve as the basis of the postulates for the consideration of these big historic, social, and political issues, which did confirm that around the mid 10th century around the source and in the upper flow of the river Bosnia and the surrounding regions, there was a state of Bosnia and its residents known as Bošnjani /int: Boshnian/.

History as a science identified that Bosnia existed, no later than the 10th century, as independent state in its political sense, and that it was not under the political influence of any other neighboring state and it functioned as such the following 500 years. This fact is best confirmed by historic facts that numerous invading wars were organized against Bosnia and its autochthon Bosnian church, with the aim of conquering Bosnia and imposing the Catholicism. Rome (Vatican) organized ample interventions to eradicate the so-called heretics of the Bosnian church, which was the ruling most influential spiritual institution in the medieval Bosnian state, which had been accused of heresies by Vatican. The teaching of the Bosnian church, structured as part of Bosnian identity and the holder of its idea of independence, served as a spiritual resistance to the Catholicism and Eastern orthodox teaching and was the cause for numerous crusade wars against Bosnia.

Among the documents, which clearly speak in favor of political and any other independence of Bosnia and the full capacity of the Bosnian rulers is the *Charter of Kulin ban*, issued to Dubrovnik in 1189. There is a large number of Charters and other documents issued by the Bosnian kings, as well as other sources, which confirm the life of the Bosnian state, its full political independence, specific features on the internal affairs, religious autochthon position and independence.

In addition to the *Charter* of the Kulin ban, a historic document which confirms the life of Bosnian state and its independence, another important date in the Bosnian history is the fall of the Bosnian state in 1463. This date confirms that the Ottomans conquered Bosnia, as of when Bosnia continues to exist as a province within the Ottoman Empire, without the elements of the state, except those that existed in the minds of people. Bosnians knew of its state, glorious history and they hoped that it would be restored, following the principle that “every force is for some time”, and that the basic right of Bosnians to have their state will be achieved.

Bosniacs tried to achieve it in 1831-1832, in a series of rebellions against the Ottoman Empire, when Serbia, Greece, Bulgaria, Vlaška and some other provinces got the national and state autonomy with a big help of the Western countries. However, the Bosnian insurrections, despite some victories against the Ottoman army, did not succeed in restoring its state, primarily because they did not receive any help from the Western countries. Their attempt to restore the Bosnian state was not supported, because the leading force were Bosniacs – of Islamic religion (the Christian Europe did not support the Bosnian resurrection – Movement for the autonomy of Bosnia, because it did not want a state in Europe where Bosniacs Muslims would be a factor). The lack of support produced a counter effect, as it supported the aspirations of other states towards Bosnia, so that Serbia and Montenegro, as well as Austro-Hungary tried to destabilize the situation in Bosnia, by organizing rebellions and movements which aimed at facilitation of Serbian, Montenegrin, or Austro-Hungarian domination in Bosnia.

These attempts had their finale at the Berlin Congress in 1878, when Bosnia and Herzegovina was given to Austro-Hungary, which got the mandate to “occupy and rule the provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina”, with the mission to establish the peace and order. In fact, this was the excuse for subsequent incorporation of Bosnia and Herzegovina into Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Bosnia and Herzegovina remained inside Austro-Hungary until the 29th October 1918, and on 1 December it became a part of the newly established common Yugoslav Monarchist state (Kingdom of Serbians, Croats, and Slovenians, that is, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia). This is one of the crucial dates in the history of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which just like previous dates (1463 and 1878) prove the life of forces interested in eradicating Bosnia and Herzegovina as a historic and political subject from the European political map. With the introduction of 6th January dictatorship, in accordance with the great-Serbian ideology, politics and practice, the territorial units and specifics of Bosnia and Herzegovina were destroyed, and the compactness of Bosniacs. With the Serbian-

Croatian Agreement of 1939, Bosnia and Herzegovina was divided between Serbia and Croatia, while disregarding that the Bosniacs were majority nation.

With the fall and the capitulation of the monarchist Yugoslavia in April 1941, within the framework of fascistic occupation and the destruction of Yugoslavia in 1941, the so-called Independent State of Croatia was declared on the 10th April, which incorporated Bosnia and Herzegovina by the decision of the fascistic forces and the intention of the Croatia fascists. Peoples and citizens of Bosnia were not even consulted for such an establishment. Thus, Bosniacs were turned into the object of Croatia politics.

The occupational regime resulted in the overall deterioration of living conditions, especially severe persecutions and expelling of population. This, and the mobilization of the main occupational forces for Yugoslavia to the Eastern front, reduction of the occupation density to the European average of 1 soldier to 1 square kilometer of the occupied territory, was used by the Communist Party to initiate the antifascist rebellion. Government of Kingdom of Yugoslavia in exile placed itself under the protection of Great Britain, after the capitulation was signed, and it did not respond to the call of the Antifascist coalition to organize the Resistance movement in the country, where they waited in London for the fall of the Tripartite pact to take over the authority in Yugoslavia. The Chetnic movement Draža Mihailović joined other collaborationists in fighting the Peoples Liberation movement, executing genocide against Bosniacs and other crimes against combatants and supporters of Peoples Liberation movement, and all other antifascists.

The Ustasha collaborationist regime relied more on the Nazi Third Reich and following their patterns, it engaged in persecution of non-Croatian population. The first victims of the Ustasha genocide were Serbians, Jews, and Roma, and in July the Islamic community strongly reacted and opposed to this. Those were well known **Muslim resolutions**, which were unique phenomenon during the WWII.

All, but the first quisling offensives, were in the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the biggest battles, such as Neretva and Sutjeska, which were the turning point in the Yugoslav frontline.

Antifascism in Yugoslavia, 1941-1945, with its victory established the civilization foundations of contemporary mankind. In this war, Yugoslavia, especially Bosnia and Herzegovina, had a signified and prominent position, giving a huge contribution to antifascist combat and the liberation of the country.

Bosniacs in Peoples Liberation War, equally with other peoples and forces made a single antifascist block, in which they opposed occupants and their collaborationists, and

suffered huge losses on the genocidal background, and yet they secured the biological survival (without antifascist battles Bosniacs would not survive – Peoples Liberation movement helped them survive).

During the antifascist war, there was a crucial change in the political relations in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Antifascist war against the occupants and their collaborationists could count only on the success if all the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina and all the peoples living there were convinced that the war would bring them **equality and freedom**. That was the decisive factor, which orientated the political life and opinion in Bosnia and Herzegovina towards the common, not the partial political goals. The position stem from this fact that Bosnia and its citizens, peoples living in it, may be free and equal only if Bosnia is equal to other countries, which emerged from the antifascist war. Thus, the dominant position appeared that the war against fascism and the fight for equality of citizens and peoples in the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina is possible and efficient only if the Bosnian state is restored and all its peoples equal. This political platform had an absolute and unchallenged support of all the antifascist forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the representatives of all its peoples who on 25th November 1943 adopted the famous *ZAVNOBiH Resolution*, which restored the statehood of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as the single state of Serbs, Croats, and Muslims (Bosniacs).

ZAVNOBiH Resolution and the emerging of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina constitute key date in the recent history of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the basis which facilitates the complete independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina. *ZAVNOBiH* is a proof that the common living is not only possible but also logical in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and that their common state can only function for the good of all and as such it can provide good results. Thus, *ZAVNOBiH* as of 1943 is the most important date in our history, the date which confirms millennium long history of Bosnia and it serves as a model for the development of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which secures full equality and freedom to all its peoples. Independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992) is only a logical consequence and the result of what the history of Bosnia and Herzegovina presented, and for what *ZAVNOBiH* secured essential political and constitutional prerequisites. The legacy of Peoples Liberation war and antifascist war in the WWII were important foundation of the defensive war 1992-1995 against fascism, aimed at preservation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The mere name of a nation, which has lived in the current territory of Bosnia (*Bošnjani*) since the medieval times, suggests that it stems from the fact that they were members or the residents of the state of Bosnia and subject of their rulers. First known rulers

were called Ban of Bosnia, Rama, Usora, Soli, and Donjih Krajeva (Lower regions), depending on the territorial change of the country until the present day. The important facts are that Bosnia since its beginning has residents known as Bošnjani, and that they called themselves with that name, and that we encounter that name of the Bosnia residents in numerous historic documents. At the same time, we cannot find any other name referring to any ethnicity, and there is no other ethnonym, which would mark its original residents. The ethnonyms used were Raška residents, Zeta resident, Dubrovnik residents, Croatians, Hungarians, but only to suggest a foreigner who temporarily stayed in Bosnia, but they were not known as residents or “**good Bošnjani**“, as we can often see in the documents issued by the Bosnian Bans and Kings. Once we have such a clear evidence that the peoples of the first Bosnian state was known as Bošnjani (good Bošnjani), the questions are: how was this ethnonym lost, and how was it changed to the territorial name Bosnians; where the ethnic names of Serbs and Croats in Bosnia come from; and if any part of those original residents kept any link with the original name of the Bosnia residents – Bošnjani.

Territorial name appeared as a result of the interruption in the historic development caused by the Ottoman rule. That rule slowed the process of ethnic development in terms of establishment of single ethnicity which would result in the nation of Bošnjani once the historic development reaches the required stage (in the civil society). Thus, Bošnjani continued to exist in the form of marking Bosnians and Bosniacs, as they were renamed in the Ottoman version for all the residents of Bosnia. They were divided into Bosniacs Muslims, Bosniac Catholics and Bosniac Orthodox, and the traces of that division and their common name is very visible in our traditional onomatology. Almost one thousand families, former Bosnian Catholics have the family name Bošnjak, which is most common in that ethnic group. There are also Bosniac Orthodox, though they, at the time of propaganda and political activities of Serbian and Croatian nationalistic movement, started from their religious identity, accepted the offered national names of the Serbians and Croatians. Bosniacs of Islamic religion remained faithful to their name and their state, because they did not look for their national identification or political independence in other countries. Thus, they remained holders of the idea and political reality of the restoration of their state, while the Serbian and Croatian national determination of Catholics and Orthodox implied their separation from other residents of Bosnia, that is, their state and their original identity. It is of course the fact that Muslims remained with its original traditional name, and as such they expressed their ambition to restore Bosnia (Resurrection 1831-1832) which had to be the obstacle to the ambitions of the Serbian and Croatian nationalism, which started developing

in the 19th century, which is the reason why these two constantly deny Bosniacs as a nation and ethnicity, which unfortunately they still do.

In this regard, it is important to document this relation in a way which indicates that Bosniacs, not only because of their status in the Ottoman empire when they had the status of recognized groups (military, religious, merchants) and were not exempted from the military service, unlike Catholics and Orthodox, defended Bosnia from the invasions coming from east and west. They continued with that until the last aggressor war, when the Orthodox largely presented their anti Bosnian activities and Catholics supported the invasion and policy of division of the Bosnian territory between Serbia and Croatia. That is the reason why we it should be stated that the Bosniacs are the guarantee of the integrity and life of the Bosnian state, which is furthermore the security of Bosniacs from the repeated genocide, which has happened several times. In this regard, Bosniacs cannot accept whatever the cost, or the international community for the sake of peace and international legality, any undermining of the territorial integrity and unity of the Bosnian state. This integrity and unity of Bosnia as the state is the only guarantee of peace in the Balkans and Europe.

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In its major part of the history, Bosnia, and its population, especially Bosniacs were **stretched between huge ideological and political divisions** in Balkans and European continent. The boundaries between the Western and Eastern Roman Empire went through Bosnia (Rome and Byzanth), eastern and western Christianity, as well as those that **separated** Venice, Austria and Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and Ottoman Empire.

Numerous crusade war and conquers against Bosnia, which exists for at least mid of the 10th century, and its autochthon Bosnian Church were started in the medieval times. Bosnia, as a respectable kingdom, successfully defended its state independence until the mid 15th century. Weak as the result of these wards and internal conflicts, and under the heavy attacks coming from the Ottomans, without any help from the Christian West, which was expected after the king Stjepan Tomaš was baptized and the coronation of Stjepan Tomašević with the Pope crown, Bosnia finally surrendered to the Ottoman power in 1463.

As the protruded Ottoman province Bosnia served as a polygon for further Ottoman conquers of Central Europe. After the Ottomans were defeated in the Vienna war (1683-1699), Bosnia became a borderline Ottoman province exposed to permanent attacks coming

from Austria and Venice. In these wars, which continued throughout the 18th century, Bosnia managed with its forces to defend itself, and succeeded to win the crucial battle near Banja Luka in 1737.

During the 19th and 20th century, Serbia (in the east) and Croatia (in the west) constantly fought around Bosnia, while the Bosniacs were squeezed in the middle. Historically observed, as of the fall of the Ottoman power in 1878, until the present day, Bosnia is **the key battleground and the victim of the confronting Serbian and Croatian nationalistic and great state interests**. These are the demands which are the part greater Serbian and Croatian hegemonic aspirations towards Bosnia and Bosniacs, with the objective to occupy Bosnia and incorporate it into Serbian or Croatia, and divide, and exterminate biologically and spiritually Bosniacs.

The conquering aspirations of the genocidal character from both western and eastern neighbors are present in Bosnia also in part of Serbian and Croatian historians and politicians. Serbian and Croatian nationalistic historiography and politics **deny** Bosnia as a state and Bosniacs as people. Denying Bosniacs, the representatives of such historic science and politics **deny** its history, culture, language, religion, tradition, **ethnic background, identity, and status of nation**.

Numerous crimes have been committed against Bosnia and Bosniacs based on this nationalistic ideology and great state projects, and the culmination was in the 20th century.

The permanent activities of the Serbian and Croatian nationalism have been apparently present in their attempts to destroy Bosnia and Herzegovina as a historic, territorial, cultural, political, and the constitutional subject, and their attempts to prevent the establishment of the state in its historic form. This can be seen not only in the politics and ideology of the Serbianhood and Croatianhood, but also in the continued state, political, and military activity pursued for more than hundred and fifty years. Presently, these attempts intensify and every new stage they appear in the worse genocidal form. Namely, it is the historic fact that every new genocide is expressed as far more violent form of elimination of Bosniacs from their historic territory.

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Bosnia and Herzegovina is facing, lest to say, the crisis of the BiH society: grave economic situation, unemployment, low living standard, corruption, insecurity, isolation of

Bosnia and Herzegovina, obstruction and blockade in making constitutional changes, legal operation of fascistic organizations, public announcement of potential fall of Bosnia and Herzegovina, etc.

The world, in addition to the economic, faces also a deep moral civilization crisis. The world is changing, from one to another minute. Leading, mainly political structures in the world are focused on securing enormous wealth, financial resources, gold, oil, and the start of the 21st century is announcing strong fight for drinking water.

The current Dayton Bosnia and Herzegovina consists of two entities, one of which is *Republika Srpska* or the Serb entity, genocidal creation of the great-Serbian Nazism, built on grave violations of international humanitarian law, marked and soaked, mainly in Bosniac blood, and bordered and covered with numerous mass graves and concentration camps, in which fascist organizations legally operate. The so-called international community legalized this genocidal creation and identified it as a constitutional category. Political leadership and other structures of *Republika Srpska*, in accordance with the great-Serbian genocidal ideology, politics and practice conceal, minimize, relativize and deny genocide against Bosniacs in all possible ways; they equalize the genocide victims with the genocide executors; deny historic, political, legal, and state continuity of Bosnia and Herzegovina, obstruct the strengthening of Bosnia and Herzegovina and constantly pursue the secession and destruction of Bosnia and Herzegovina, by denying the possibility of development and improvement of the quality of common living, whereby they seriously undermine universal human values, freedoms and rights, civilization and cultural legacy. The entity *Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina*, whose foundation lies in the Washington Agreement (18 March 1994), basically lives as two separate entities, in one of which the collaborationists of the creation of Croatian Community of Herzeg-Bosnia operate, whose leadership is currently in trial (for joint criminal enterprise) before ICTY, and their supporters, in cooperation with the *Republika Srpska* leadership publicly advocate for such a criminal creation.

Bosnia and Herzegovina Bosniacs are again in a difficult situation and they are facing challenges. After the aggression and genocide, now in new conditions, the status of Bosnia and Herzegovina is again at stake. Bosniacs cannot survive without it. Bosnia today (unique in Europe) is challenged by some European and world politicians and especially the political structures of the neighboring states, even from within Bosnia – by those ideologies, policies and practice that carried out the genocide.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is totally helpless.

New borders are drawn again in and around Bosnia and Herzegovina – and they were previously drawn by Austria, Serbia, Croatia, Montenegro, Dragiša Cvetković and Vlatko Maček, Ante Pavelić, Draža Mihailović, Franjo Tuđman and Slobodan Milošević, “wise” people in the Contact group and many others.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has been at stake at every minute. There are many who want this situation to continue indefinitely. Great-Serbian criminals count on the recognition of the entity Republika Srpska. This scenario is unfortunately, because the antifascist movement has not yet found its place in Bosnia and Herzegovina to be the holder of the idea of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Its establishment among the Bosniacs is constantly postponed due to the narrow party and their leaders ambitions.

In addition to imminent denial of Bosnia, which was always the state of tolerance, meeting point of cultures and civilizations, its principal nation is also denied – Bosniacs, the nation which takes the identity from this state, the nation which is clearly profiled – spiritually and politically, nation which attached itself to Bosnia and constantly defended Bosnia, while the others looked for the support in Austria, Serbia, Croatia and elsewhere.

Bosniacs are autochthon European nation, in whose ethnogenesis the initial elements is Illyrian, who equally with the oldest nations in Europe nourish the ancient civilization and culture. They are the only nation in the Balkans that had high aristocracy (big landowners with more than 200,000 ha; nation that had a state, Lords, Captains, merchants, intellectuals, villagers). Bosniacs formulated its living space in historically and internationally recognized borders of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Its natural right to state and territory were built by Bosniacs for centuries along with the orthodox – Serbians, Catholics – Croats Jews, and other BiH ethnicities and citizens. They have never denied that right to their neighbors. They have always believed that the common living in a common state is a historic and civilization legacy and necessity confirmed in a centuries long history. Bosniacs thus believe that thousand years long spiritual and civilization experience and the corresponding legacy is the basis to preserve the sense of common living in the area.

The entire history of Bosniacs is characterized with the combat for the independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina, free life and tolerance with other nations. The fight for independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the freedom of consciousness and religion have continued throughout the history and they formed their character and understanding of Bosniacs to such an extent that it became part of their nature and their basic feature. Bosniacs have never spread the spirit of hatred or violence although they were constantly exposed to constant persecutions, extermination, and denial. During the WWII they paid the highest

price of its survival, and during the aggression against Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1991 -1995, they were again the genocide victims. Bosniacs are the only nation on the territory of South-Slavs who did not have its own fascistic ideology or movement. Extermination of Bosniacs and destruction of their traces, destruction of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and division of its territory has always been the objective of the aggression against Bosnia and Herzegovina. Such politics has lead Bosnia and Herzegovina Serbs and Croats to disasters. The only possibility for survival of all in these areas lies in the common living in tolerance and peace. Bosniacs do not see any other alternative to this or accept other solutions.

For more than 100 years, Bosniacs were denied and marginalized as a political nation:

- destroyed physically, economically, systematically, and non-systematically
- humiliated culturally,
- satanized religiously as Asian-Islamic relict,
- pleasantly mingled in the dim Yugoslavhood, “which was the purgatory for the

future national determination“

- twenty years they lived under the name of Muslim, which was always possible to ethnogenetically and politically relativize, and in case of the need misuse, **moving us further semantically from the feeling about the state, origin, and language,**

- without clear political program,
- without the essential political leadership,
- without sufficient appreciation for political, scientific, cultural, and religious authorities,

- without the lack of feeling for every form of organization,
- without sufficient constitutional awareness,
- without insufficient awareness and respect towards own genocide victims, etc.

In the general societal and social regression, caused by historic turmoil in the Balkans developed among the Bosniacs what Alija Isaković defined as “detrimental features which destroy our inner body and soul“.

Moreover, in addition to being Bosniacs- Muslims they are more: Sarajevans, people from Sandžak, Herzegovans, propel from Krajina, which emphasize more their geographic properties as relevant “qualities“.

Bosniacs live with low discipline, local patriotism, political shortsightedness, envy, jealousy, hatred, low tolerance, no unity, slow learning of the lessons related to the repetition of genocide, unproductive awaiting for somebody else’s help, etc. Unfortunately, all forms of extremes can be found among Bosniacs-Muslims, whereby the course of history is one of the

reasons for this situation. Alija Isaković wrote “I have never met so well-intentioned people, so naïve, determined, self-sacrificing, ready for every kind of personal and collective sacrifice, and I have never met such individuals and groups who are so narrow-minded, completely self-sufficient, politically slimy, and most of all obsessed with disrespect for its own, its name, religion, tradition, past”.

There are many ignorant people among Bosniacs and wise people who do not have much knowledge or morality.

Concerns and fear for the state and survival are present among Bosniacs-Muslims, not only because of great-state Serbian ideology, politics and practice, and the great-state Croatia project, but also because of incompetence and vanity of some Bosniac politicians, and the intelligence (secular and spiritual) mainly keeps quiet. The intellectual elite instead of being the “herald of spring“, as the criminal Dobrica Ćosić stated – is silent and is afraid. Instead of fighting for the truth and justice, for Bosnia and Herzegovina and its people, the Bosniac intelligence keeps quiet and disregards the sacred mission and the responsibility of the scientists and intellectuals to fight for the truth and identify the forgeries and lies.

There is nothing sacred, unfortunately, among the Bosniacs. There is no authority, no respect. Not only that, there are even ideas among Bosniacs that they are guilty for “war“. Considering this, as a historian, I want to tell you openly now:

- firstly, great-Serbian and great-Croatian genocidal ideology and politics towards Bosnia and Herzegovina would not prevent our **different behavior**, or any **different political structure** or **political figure** from our nation. If we fail to understand this correctly, then we join the aggressor, their collaborationists, and their allegations about our guilt or division of guilt. By presenting such assessment, I would not like to be misunderstood. I am not trying to claim that we have always behaved or worked in an organized manner during the defensive war, and I will not say that everything had to happen as it did, especially if we have in mind the Dayton Accord, etc. The basic course of events took its course, as we all know. This was not a civil war, and there was no “ethnic cleansing“. This was the aggressor, invading war – the aggression against R BiH and genocide against Bosniacs – implementation of the great-state projects: destruction of BiH and extermination of Bosniacs;

- secondly, Bosniacs have never provoked Serbs or Croats to cause genocide against our unprotected nation. Their genocide is the result of their plans. Numerous relevant documents, from recent and past history, speak in favor of this. But, we unfortunately, have not learned any historic lessons from this. We have forgotten these lessons in **our naïve benevolence** and **political negligence**;

- thirdly, the overall picture of the West-European politics suggests not only insufficiently, but in many things rather hostile attitude towards Bosnia. Why? Because, there lives, despite many genocides, majority Bosnian Muslim population. Europe has been established as anti-Islamic creation even in the 7th century, and a big portion of its history was marked with fighting Islam and expelling of Muslim from Europe – Europe which is the cradle of fascism and the concentration camps. Muslims are not authors of either fascism or genocide. Europe and the international community, including UNSC exposed Bosnian Muslims to aggression and genocide conducted by FRY (Serbia and Montenegro) and the Republic of Croatia, by denying them the fundamental right to individual and collective self-defense confirmed by the UN Charter. Before the eyes of Europe and the entire world, at the end of the 20th century, the genocide was committed against Bosniacs in the heart of Europe, because they feared the “Muslim Bosnia“ and the fact, as Mitterrand stated that “the Bosnian state does not belong to Europe“, and did nothing to prevent it. Results of that history, politics, and practice are present even today;

- fourthly, great-Serbian and great-Croatian propaganda, starting from the European exclusiveness and Muslim phobia, frightens the world with our religion and our, by objective experts found, virtues, as if it is the danger. Bosniacs have always been moderate, pleasant, and considerate, and polite and this has always been treated as our weakness, instead of generosity of our Muslim being.

Anti-Bosnian, anti-Bosniac, anti-Muslim invasions, challenge and hate our spiritual clarity and leave the blood trace while eradicating everything we have touched or enriched with our spirit.

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At this point, in addition to the statements which qualify and identify the genuine nature of the Serbian and Croatian nationalism, of fascistic and genocidal character, it is important to carry out the critique of the Bosniac political opinion, in fact our political opportunism and define exactly what was it in the views of the Bosniac politicians, throughout the history, that made us inferior in defending our interests. It is important for any possibility of finding exit from the current situation. Without this critique and the identification of such politics in our time, and the identification of its contemporary holders and its rejection, there will be no way out from the current situation, and everything will be

limited to empty calling of Muslims and Bosniacs to gather, as it has proven to be meaningless, because it is impossible to gather and develop genuine political and historic force without rejecting any politics that deviates from the experience and logic of our position in the structure of European and Balkan political reality during the past 150 years.

Bosniacs today, based on assessment of the real situation, external and internal relations which affect the political position of this nation, and the visions of future developments and processes, are forced to express their national interests comprehensively, if they want to preserve the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina and its nation.

Political ambient in which Bosniacs exercise their national interests is totally broken. On the other hand, a new political ambient is created and the Bosniac involvement cannot be imagined without its own project where the millennium long constants, on which the common living is based, have to be placed in a focus. Their intentional or unintentional rejection would have disastrous consequences for the survival of Bosniacs.

If the Bosniac intellect does not present its fundamental interests immediately, these interests will continue to be dispersed, partial and confronted as naked interests of individual political, religious, intellectual, economic, military-police, regional, mafia, family and other groups. Partial interests during the aggression evolved even to the armed conflict within the Bosniac corpus, and this is the best illustration of detrimental effect.

Partial interests are declared national interests, which among other things discredit the natural aspiration of Bosniacs to preserve Bosnia and Herzegovina and its nation. That is the reason why the natural right of Bosniacs is shown by their enemies as the attempt to install Islamic fundamentalism in the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

It became unbearable that Bosniacs do not have an answer to the fundamental issues of our preset and future, that the solutions are found on the case-to-case basis and in compromises to the detriment of Bosniacs, which initiates even bigger mistrust within the Bosniac corpus.

Bosniac collective intellect has the responsibility and the right to present the aspirations and interests of its nation. Only Bosniacs can present them comprehensively and without any bias, the representatives of political, cultural, scientific, educational, economic, religious, military, humanitarian, and other institutions and associations, prominent individuals and true antifascists and patriots, because they individually cannot do that and they have no right to do that.

Bosniacs can preserve their survival and development only in a common state of all citizens and nations of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the state which will guarantee the safety and

defense, economic and democratic prosperity, and the affirmation of cultural, religious, traditional and other virtues. Bosnia and Herzegovina has to be organized as a state in a way that it prevents potential genocides against Bosniacs and narrowing their living space.

Thus, **national interest of Bosniacs is the preservation of Bosnia and Herzegovina as the state of all its citizens and nations** (this interest should be common for everyone living in Bosnia). That is our key, fundamental, highest and the utmost objective. That is the fundamental provision of the Bosniac national program.

Closest to the fight for the survival of Bosniacs is the fight for preservation of Bosniacs as a political nation, not the religious group. Bosniacs will keep this characteristics as long as there is territorial unity, independence, integrity and the sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina and its institutions, through which they can express themselves. Bosniac national interests is the introduction of legal categories of a single state, and the replacement of aggressive, criminal and genocidal ideology, politics, and practice with the postulates of civil society and state.

Only in a democracy can Bosniacs live safely and freely. Only there where the full religious, national and cultural freedoms are guaranteed can Bosniacs live with the life reserved for a human being. Every terrorizing of political, religious, or national rights, regardless of ethnicity or religion, of a group or individual has always affected Bosniacs. Thus, every form of constitutional establishment of Bosnia and Herzegovina has to be based on universal political and economic principles of a democratic society. Bosniacs regard the fight for democracy as the basis for the fight for preservation and development of sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina and its political independence.

Bosniacs submit that Bosnia and Herzegovina is a European state, and its citizens Europeans, in cultural, geopolitical, and any other meaning. Therefore, Europe is a natural space and framework for economic, political, civilization, and cultural connections with other European states and European associations. Characteristics of Bosnia and Herzegovina within Europe is that a nation lives in it with Islamic tradition and culture as a basis of its historic and national development. Bosniacs have to strive for maintaining this specifics without disrupting it with artificial and unnatural assimilations or religious violence and fanaticism, that would prevent Bosniacs from fostering and developing its identity on a permanent historic basis, in accordance with the true historic and ethnic name and the contents of its own ethnic being, and its limiting exclusively to religious feature directly results in losing the Bosniac national identity and turning Bosniacs into a religious group and community.

Element of religion is one of the most important pillars of Bosnia tradition, culture and national identity. It has to be nourished and developed independently from any political influence or state favoring. Bosniac nation, despite the Islamic spirituality, is the world of western civilization. Bosniacs have to work hard for the secular state in which the religion will be a private matter of every individual, in which the politics will be separated from religion and will engage in the sphere of public interest. Islam has to be an element by which Bosniacs will enrich the European cultural space and be the bridge between the western and eastern civilization, without disrupting the established relations or challenging the Christian Europe.

Bosniacs have to fight the decades long historic oblivion which contributed that the Bosniacs were constantly exposed to genocide by the same executors and in the same way and that the victim was always caught unprepared. Bosniacs have to strongly oppose to the manipulation with the Bosniac religious and ethnic background, by fighting the nationalistic constructions and synthesizing the ideas about the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina, reviving the Bosniac historic memory, and liberating Bosniac intellectuals from the complex of inferiority – which weakened the cultural resistance of the Bosniac intelligence and its capacity to defend from the great-Serbian and great-Croatian criminal ideology, politics, and practice which denies the life of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Bosniac nation. In this regard, the mission of national awakening is so important, renaissance, strengthening of national dignity, awareness of itself and others, and appreciating that the science, thoughts, historic experience, and intellectual freedom are the bases of every reasoning of its own nation and that this process is endless.

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It is the time for unification, and active engagement of Bosniacs in fighting for Bosnia and Herzegovina and the establishment of the unity of nation. Not only Bosniacs, but all the antifascists and antifascist forces in fighting for human dignity in BiH. That is our sacred mission, responsibility, and holy task. Bosniac intellectual elite (secular and spiritual) plays an important role in achieving these missions, responsibilities and tasks. The Bosniac units in Bosnia and Herzegovina depends on their judgments, engagement, and actions. They are therefore expected to make only adequate decisions, objectively, realistically, without any anger, openly, sincerely, in a civilized manner, and with a lot of wisdom – but only those wise ones that will satisfy all the Bosniacs in Bosnia and Herzegovina and even wider. I am

convinced that we shall be successful in this task, especially because all the genocide victims expect us to do so, as they were killed only because of their national, ethnic, or religious background, and because someone wanted to occupy their *living space* and because Bosnia and Herzegovina was defended. Our children expect us to do so and they ask us to build one by one brick, while equal and without any regional or party divisions, and without any confrontations to our unity, our concordance and future.