

CROATIA AND CROATS OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA HAVE LONG BEEN UNDER ATTACK BY ISLAMIST TERRORISM

Speech delivered in the Croatian Parliament

by

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Croatia and Croats of Bosnia and Herzegovina under terroristic attacks by Islamists

Terrorism is not just an abstract concept to us. Croatia, and particularly Croats of Bosnia and Herzegovina (*Bosna i Hercegovina*, BiH), have long been under attack by Islamist terrorism.

It began during the war in BiH, when several thousands of volunteers from Islamic nations which, naming themselves after Afghan veterans, called themselves mujaheddins, participated on the Bosniak-Muslim Army (Armija BiH) side. Most of them crossed through Croatia during the initial Croat-Muslim alliance. They fought within the unit “El Mudzahid” of the Bosniak-Muslim Armija BiH and committed atrocious crimes, including the ritual beheading of prisoners beginning with the Serbs, and then, in the second half of the war, Croat prisoners as well.

With the blessing of the Bosniak political elite, for example **Sefik Dzaferovic**, the current Bosniak member of the tripartite Presidency of BiH, they were granted BiH citizenship without any supervision. Some of them remained living in BiH after the war, mostly in isolated communities where they were joined by young local men. These communities have become hotbeds for future terrorists. Some of them engaged in the post-war task of harassing Croat returnees, mostly in Central Bosnia which was for the most part kept secret in Croatia.

In Croatia, Islamist terrorism is considered to be far removed, something that happens in “big countries” or cities such as Paris, but Croatian citizens have also been targets of Islamist terrorism, from the massacre of twelve workers of the *Hidroelektra* enterprise in Algeria in 1993 to a terrorist attack organised by **al-Jama’a al-Islamiyya** in Rijeka (Croatia) in October 1995, after Croatia had extradited its leader. A suicide bomber crashed into the police station in Rijeka with a car. As a result, thirty people were wounded and it is miraculous that there were no casualties.

In neighbouring BiH, Islamist terrorism has been present continuously since the war in the 1990s. In 1997, a major terrorist attack took place in Mostar. A car bomb exploded in the Western part of the city, which is mostly populated by Croats. More precisely, a device that included 15 anti-tank mines, 450 sticks of dynamite, 20 anti-personnel mines and 15 kilograms of explosives. The result was the wounding of dozens, some of whom were severely injured, and damage to hundreds of apartments and cars. The attack was organised by **Ahmed Zuhair Handala**, an Islamist who ended up later in the Guantanamo camp.

Immediately after the terroristic attack, some media sources based in Sarajevo attempted to float the story that the Croats attacked themselves in order to be seen as victims. Shamefully, the opposition media in Croatia also supported this narrative. Later, the real perpetrators, Handala and his crew, were uncovered. Nonetheless, there were no apologies by those who perpetuated this fiction.

Networks of Islamist terrorists from BiH to the USA

According to a document revealed by Wikileaks and signed by the commander of the US Navy in Guantanamo Bay, Rear Admiral **David M. Thomas Jr.**, it is noted that Handala took part in the murder of a US citizen in BiH, in a car bomb terrorist attack in Mostar, and in the USS Cole bombing near Yemen.

Ahmed Zuhari Handala from Saudi Arabia, had been registered in Zagreb at Milan Resetar street, number 36/4. Croatian authorities issued him an identity card in December 1994, which expired three years later. All of this had been done as part of the support offered to “humanitarian workers”. In fact, several of them were Muslim “missionaries” who had arrived in BiH during the War under this pretext. His [Handala’s] real identity was **Ahmed Zayud Salim Al Zahayri**. According to the latest available information, published by Wikileaks, he is still in the Guantanamo detention camp.

Bombs were also planted under Catholic churches in Bugojno (BiH) in 1996, and in Sarajevo (BiH) in 1997. The same year, a planned assassination of **Pope John Paul II** was prevented during his visit to Sarajevo. The explosive under the bridge John Paul II was to have crossed was discovered just in time.

In 1998, Islamists set bombs which killed two Croat police officers, who also were returnees to Travnik.

In 1999, Deputy Interior Minister **Jozo Leutar** was killed by a car bomb. Thus far, the perpetrators have not been identified, although there are numerous indications that the assassination was carried out by the Islamist group linked to certain members of the Bosniak-Muslim political elite.

The most shocking example [of Islamist attacks against BiH’s Croats] is the fate of the returnee **family Andelic** from Kostajnica near Konjic. On Christmas Eve in 2002, the entire family was killed inside its home by the Wahhabi-Islamist **Muamer Topalovic**.

In 2008, a bomb was planted in the FIS Vitez department store, which represents one of the greatest Croat economic successes in BiH, killing one person.

Not only were Christians targets of the Islamist terrorists, but BiH institutions as well. This is evidenced by the attack on the police station in Bugojno in 2010, in which one police officer was killed. In 2011, the Wahhabi-Islamist **Mevlid Jasarevic** fired a Kalashnikov at the US Embassy in Sarajevo in broad daylight for a full half hour.

In April 2015, **Nerdin Ibric**, a local citizen linked to Wahhabi groups, killed one and wounded two police officers in Zvornik. In November of the same year, a terrorist attack from the same milieu was carried out by **Enes Omeragic**, who killed two soldiers of the BiH Army in Rajlovac, a suburb of Sarajevo. Shortly afterwards, in the course of the police operation “Rez” (Cut), a group of eleven **Islamic State-linked extremists** were arrested in Sarajevo for planning a terrorist attack on New Year’s Eve.

Islamist terrorists from BiH to the ISIL

In the meantime, in addition to the wartime mujaheddins, later Wahhabis, a new danger presented itself with regard to hundreds of fighters from BiH who fought, and are still fighting, in Syria and Iraq on the side of the Islamic State (ISIL). The number of departures of residents from BiH in order to join the jihad in the Middle East has reached such proportions that a special Law on the Prohibition of Leaving for Foreign Battlefields has been passed in BiH.

This would be sufficient reason for any rational person to understand the scale of the terrorist danger in the Croatian neighborhood. However, Croatian media was almost embarrassed to have reported that ISIL’s flags were occasionally flown in Wahhabi villages, which are completely outside of the BiH state system. The closest municipality to Croatia is Velika Kladuša (BiH), only an hour’s drive from Zagreb. Who is responsible for such a situation? Above all, those who brought in the Islamists and tolerated their activities.

The Wahhabi movement was imported and funded primarily by Saudi Arabia. BiH intelligence and security agencies have repeatedly designated the **Saudi “King Fahd” Center** in Sarajevo a gathering place for radical Islamists. And nobody has reacted, because, to put it mildly, so far there has been a lack of political will to resolve the matter. Saudi Arabia is a great American ally, and the Americans are the strongest foreign factor in BiH, so I assume it is inconvenient for them. If Americans had dedicated only a fraction of the energy, time and money that they have invested during the last two decades in crushing politically the least numerous national group in BiH, the Croats of BiH, to fighting Islamist terrorism, they would not have this problem today.

The situation is schizophrenic: a great American ally finances the Wahhabis, and then the Wahhabis shoot up the American Embassy in Sarajevo and nobody reacts.

The news that some of the fans of the BiH national football team, in the return leg of the qualifying play-offs for the European Championship against Ireland, broke the minute of silence for the victims of the attack in Paris by shouting “Palestine, Palestine!” also went around the world.

The Daily Mail article “Bosnian Refugees Who ‘Aided America’s Enemies With Cash For Equipment’” has reported the old news that U.S. authorities have accused at least 66 people of planning ISIL-related terrorism on American soil, including six people from BiH, who were arrested and charged.

Also problematic was the number presented by the Croatian President **Kolinda Grabar Kitarovic** of several thousand volunteers from BiH who had gone to foreign battlefields.¹ Reacting to it, the Minister of Security of BiH, **Dragan Mektic**, attempted to be more precise by stating that “there were 226 people from BiH on the Syrian battlefield, not thousands, as the Croatian President says. There are currently 115 of them there, 65 killed and 45 returned”. We cannot ever know the real number, because when they left BiH, they did not report to Mektic or provide information about their destination.

The number of casualties, or more precisely, those who are registered as such, is significant because it suggests that more than 226 went to the battlefields. Contrary to Mektic, the Deputy Minister of Security of BiH **Mijo Kresic** confirmed the thesis of Grabar Kitarovic by quoting the statement of the Chairman of the NATO Military Committee, General **Petr Pavel**, who said that the Balkans are threatened by Islamist terrorism, but also by the Russian influence, and that BiH could become a “haven for terrorism”. Not to mention the interference of foreign countries, such as Saudi Arabia and other sponsors of “radical Islam”, in BiH.

Bosniak-Muslim connections to Islamist terrorists

Sefik Dzaferovic, who also held high positions in the security service during the war, was accused of granting BiH citizenship to Islamist fighters from the BiH Army unit “El Mujahed”. A statement signed by the Croatian Democratic Union of BiH argues that “as a signatory to BiH citizenship documents, Dzaferovic assisted world-renowned terrorists, radicals and mujaheddins who took part in one of the world’s largest terrorist attacks in which innocent people were killed. As such, he cannot represent the BiH state leadership whose objective must be a better future, peace, and coexistence for the peoples and citizens of BiH”.

The former BiH Security Minister **Fahrudin Radoncic** posted on his Instagram profile a text entitled “Dzaferovic’s plan is not and will never be mine” in which he published documents showing that the Bosniak member of the BiH Presidency, Sefik Dzaferovic, while mayor of the Security Services Center in Zenica, granted BiH citizenship to mujaheddins who fought in BiH, as reported by the Croat Media Service. Sefik Dzaferovic gave BiH citizenship to mujaheddins fighters from Egypt, Pakistan, Tunisia, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and Jordan.

In February 1996, the Washington Post reported that approximately 200 Iranian instructors were still present at the Fojnica terrorist camp and were continuing their activities. Two days later, the NATO-led mission IFOR landed at the camp. The commander of the IFOR, the US Admiral **Leighton Smith**, said: “you do not have to be a genius to realize that we found something there that is obviously terrorist training. And there is no denying that this terrorist training in this camp took place in direct cooperation with the people in power.”

Professor **Miroslav Tudjman** in an interview to Globus, on September 1st, 2017 stated:

¹ In 2010, the Director of the Intelligence-Security Agency of BiH **Almir Dzuvo** stated that in BiH live 3,000 potential terrorists, and almost all have BiH citizenship (<https://slobodnadalmacija.hr/vijesti/regija/u-bih-prijeti-opasnost-od-3-000-potencijalnih-terorista-vecina-su-bh-drzavljani-105220>, 07/13/2010).

„The fact is that two of the eighteen men who attacked the WTC had had experience from the fighting in BiH. That is why **Alija Izetbegovic** had to resign four weeks after the destruction of the WTC“.²

² This is also confirmed by Evan F. Kohlmann, *Al-Qaida's Jihad in Europe: The Afghan-Bosnian Network*, Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2004. Kohlmann is a terrorism consultant who has worked for the FBI and other governmental organizations.