By gathering 39 local scholars, experts, and civil society activists specialized in racism and human rights, the fourth edition of the European Islamophobia Report addresses a still timely and politically important issue. All 34 country reports included in this book follow a unique structure that is convenient, first, for comparing country reports and, second, for selected readings on a particular topic such as politics, employment, or education with regards to Islamophobia across Europe.

The present report investigates in detail the underlying dynamics that directly or indirectly support the rise of anti-Muslim racism in Europe. This extends from Islamophobic statements spread in national media to laws and policies that restrain the fundamental rights of European Muslim citizens. As a result, the European Islamophobia Report 2018 discusses the impact of anti-Muslim discourse on human rights, multiculturalism, and the state of law in Europe.

This fourth edition of our report highlights how European societies are challenged by the rise of violent far-right groups that do not only preach hatred of Muslims but also participate in the organization of bloody terror attacks. The rise of far-right terrorist groups such as AFO (Action of Operational Forces) in France or the network Hannibal in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland confirms EUROPOL’s alarming surveys on the growing danger of right-wing terrorism.

This year, SETA worked in cooperation with the Leopold Weiss Institute, an Austrian NGO based in Vienna dedicated to the research of Muslims in Europe. In addition, the European Union has funded the European Islamophobia Report 2018 through the program “Civil Society Dialogue Between EU and Turkey (CSD-V)”.

**About SETA**

Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (SETA) is a non-profit research institute based in Turkey dedicated to innovative studies on national, regional and international issues. SETA is the leading think tank in Turkey and has offices in Ankara, Istanbul, Washington D.C. and Cairo. The objective of SETA is to produce up-to-date and accurate knowledge and analyses in the fields of politics, economy, and society, and inform policy makers and the public on changing political, economic, social, and cultural conditions. Through research reports, publications, brainstorming sessions, conferences and policy recommendations, SETA seeks to guide leaders in government, civil society, and business, and contributes to informed decision making mechanisms.
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ISLAMOPHOBIA IN
BOSNIA
HERZEGOVINA
NATIONAL REPORT 2018

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Disclaimer: Statements of fact and opinion in the national reports of the European Islamophobia Report are those of the respective authors. They are not the expression of the editors or the funding institutions and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union and Ministry of Foreign Affairs-Directorate for EU Affairs.

Executive Summary

Anti-Muslim bigotry and negative trends towards Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina were evident mainly in the educational, political, and media sectors. As in previous years, the main generators of Islamophobic discourse and anti-Muslim bigotry are the policymakers in the Bosnian Serb political, media, and academic fields. In 2018, Milorad Dodik, the Bosnian Serb leader and newly-elected Serb member of the B&H presidency, dehumanized Bosniak Muslims by referring to *adhan* as “howling” on a show on public Serbian television. In addition, the year 2018 saw a large increase in anti-Bosnian and anti-Muslim bigotry by the Bosnian Croat and Croatian political establishments and also by regional political actors. These actors continue to present Bosnia and Herzegovina as a failed state which is harboring extremists and which needs to be territorially divided in order to secure peace and security.

This year also saw the continuation of the denial of genocide and war crimes by the Serb authorities. The local and regional media contributed to anti-Muslim bigotry with reports about terrorist threats and radical ideology, connecting them with the Bosnian political and religious establishment. The October 2018 general elections were a main focal point for Islamophobic and anti-Muslim rhetoric in Serbian, Croatian, and Bosnian media. Bosniaks and the Islamic Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina were accused, by certain Bosnian Croat political factors, of electing the Bosnian Croat member of the B&H presidency. In addition, in 2018, the effects of the so-called migrant crisis were more pronounced compared to previous years, and the increased number of migrants became a key element in nationalists’ anti-Muslim hysteria/hysterical anti-Muslim discourse. Sensationalist media reports attempted to connect Bosniaks with “Islamic extremism” and global terrorist groups.

Lastly, the year saw a continuation of physical and verbal attacks on mosques and imams, mostly in the Bosnian-Herzegovinian entity Republika Srpska. A majority of these cases remain unresolved by the police. Additional anti-Muslim hatred was visible at football matches and in graffiti in Serb-dominated towns.
Sažetak


Ove godine se nastavilo negiranje genocida i ratnih zločina od strane srpskih zvaničnika. Domaći i regionalni mediji doprinijeli su anti-muslimanskim netrepeljivostima kroz izvještavanje o terorističkim prijetnjama i radikalnoj ideologiji, povezivajući ih s bošnjackim političkim i vjerskim zvaničnicima. U oktobru 2018. godine, izbori su bili glavna fokusna tačka za islamofobiju i anti-muslimansku retoriku koja se koristila u srpskim, hrvatskim i bosanskim medijama. Bošnjaci i Islamska zajednica u Bosni i Hercegovini bili su optuženi, od strane određenih političkih faktora bosanskih Hrvata, da su izabrali hrvatskog člana Predsjedništva BiH. Osim toga, u 2018. godini, migrantska kriza najviše je pogodila zemlju u posljednjih nekoliko godina, a povećan broj migranata učinio ga je ključnim elementom diskursa u anti-muslimanskoj histeriji od strane nacionalističkih faktora. Senzacionalistički medijski izvještaji pokušali su povezati Bošnjake sa “islamskim ekstremizmom” i globalnim terorističkim grupama.

Konačno, ove godine je vidljiv nastavak fizičkih i verbalnih napada na džamije i imame, većinom u bosanskohercegovačkom entitetu Republika Srpska. Skoro svi ovi napadi nisu procesuirani od strane policije. Dodatna anti-muslimanska mržnja bila je vidljiva na fudbalskim utakmicama i na grafitima u srpskim-dominantnim gradovima.
Country Profile

Country: Bosnia and Herzegovina

Type of Regime: Parliamentary representative democracy

Form of Government: Three-member presidential system

Ruling Parties: Party for Democratic Action (SDA), Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD)

Opposition Parties: Social Democratic Party (SDP), Serb Democratic Party (SDS), Croatian Democratic Union 1990 (HDZ 1990)

Last Elections: 2018 Presidential Election (Šefik Džaferović won 36.61% of the vote; Željko Komšić 52.64% of the vote; and Milorad Dodik 53.88% of the vote); Legislative Election (SDA: 9 seats, HDZ: 5 seats, SNSD: 6 seats)

Total Population: 3,511,372 (in 2013)

Major Languages: Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian

Official Religion: No official religion (Secularism)

Statistics on Islamophobia: In 2017, the Commission for Freedom of Religion reported 21 anti-Muslim attacks.

Statistics on Racism and Discrimination: N/A

Major Religions (% of Population): Islam (51.1%), Serbian Orthodoxy (31%), Catholicism (15%), Others/none/not stated (3%)

Muslim Population (% of Population): 1,769,592 (50.11%) in 2013 (Census of Population, Households and Dwellings in Bosnia and Herzegovina - 2013 Final Results)

Main Muslim Community Organizations: Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Main NGOs Combating Islamophobia: Riyasat Commission for Freedom of Religion; NAHLA

Far Right Parties: SNSD - Savez nezavisnih socijaldemokrata (Alliance of Independent Social Democrats), SDS - Srpska demokratska stranka (Serb Democratic Party), SRS - Srpska radikalna stranka (Serb Radical Party), HDZ - Hrvatska demokratska zajednica (Croatian Democratic Union)

Far Right Movements: Serb Nationalists Chetnik Movement, Croat Neo-Ustasha Movement

Far Right Terrorist Organisations: N/A

Limitations to Islamic Practices

- Hijab Ban: No
- Halal Slaughter Ban: No
- Minaret Ban: No
- Circumcision Ban: No
- Burka Ban: No
- Prayer Ban: No
ISLAMOPHOBIA IN BOSNIA HERZEGOVINA

Introduction

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a specific case of Islamophobia. Anti-Muslim bigotry has been present in Bosnia and Herzegovina for a long time. This Islamophobia reached the highest peaks with mass atrocities including genocide; Islamophobia was present during the Second World War and during the Bosnian War (1992-1995). Although anti-Muslim bigotry has deep roots, the first contemporary Islamophobic statements appeared in the late 1980s and were made by scholars, Orientalists, and self-proclaimed Islam experts at the University of Belgrade. Slavic Muslims were represented as traitors of Orthodox Christianity, people with weak genes who converted to Islam. This is an interesting case of Islamophobia were hatred is aimed mainly at Slavic Muslims. After the Serbian aggression and genocide of 1992-95, Islamophobia has been present in the country and in the region. Islamophobia is manifested through political statements, in the media, and in physical attacks. Most of the attacks are aimed at Bosniak returnees in Republika Srpska and in Croat-majority areas. After the end of the war, from 1996 to 2017, an estimated 13 Bosniak returnees were killed and 20 injured in hate-related crimes in Republika Srpska. Not a single murder has been prosecuted by the judicial authorities. The largest concentration of Bosniaks is in the Federation where there are almost no attacks other than occasional Islamophobic statements or writings. Research for this report was based on available reports, media analysis, and interviews with important stakeholders; people and institutions were contacted in order to gain relevant information on different topics that included the media, justice, education, etc.

It is generally accepted that Islam arrived in Bosnia with the Ottoman Empire in the fifteenth century. Today, Bosnian Muslims are overwhelmingly Sunnis. Bosnian Muslims (Bosniaks) are an indigenous Slavic ethnic group. More than 55 years of communism (1945-1990) in Yugoslavia kept religion in the dark. However, after Yugoslav President Josip Broz Tito's death in 1980, a rise of Serb nationalism first incited anti-Albanian and later anti-Muslim rhetoric. Centuries-old ideas of establishing a homogenous greater Serbian state were revived by the Yugoslav regime under Slobodan Milošević. During 1992-95, an international armed conflict and genocide (the aim of establishing a Greater Serbia and Greater Croatia meant dividing Bosnia and Herzegovina and getting rid of its Muslim population) caused the deaths of at least 100,000 people, 30,000 enforced disappearances, and the rape of 30,000 women and girls. The vast majority of the victims were Bosniaks whose remains were buried in hundreds of hidden mass graves throughout the country. In

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2. For a better understanding of the war see: Edina Bećirević, Genocide on the Drina River, (Yale: Yale University Press, 2014).
In addition to this, an estimated 600 mosques and a variety of Islamic religious objects were deliberately destroyed by the Bosnian Serb Army and the Croatian Defence Council. A decade of communism followed by genocidal massacres of the Bosniak population resulted in today’s situation where interreligious understanding and tolerance are fragile and complex.

The 1995 Dayton Peace Agreement brought an end to the war entrenching the results of genocide, and cementing the divide in the country. Annex 4 of the Dayton Agreement is the Constitution of B&H in which two separate entities (territorial units) are established: the Bosniak-Croat Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Republika Srpska, each with its own president, government, parliament, police, and other bodies. Overarching these entities is the state of Bosnian government and rotating (three-member) presidency. In addition, there is the district of Brčko, a self-governing administrative unit established as a neutral area that is placed under joint Serb, Croat, and Bosniak authority. This elaborate multitiered system of government, with cabinets and parliaments on state, entity, and cantonal levels, means that Bosnia is now overburdened with politicians and civil servants, many of whom continue to receive salaries not in keeping with the country’s impoverished condition.

When it comes to the population of Muslims in B&H, according to the census conducted in 2013, 50.11% (1,769,592) of inhabitants declared themselves to be Bosniaks (out of a total of 3,531,159). A slightly larger percentage (50.70%) stated that their religion is Islam. Since, in the case of all three constituent ethnic communities in Bosnia, the ethnic and religious identities overlap to a large extent, this figure is usually taken as indicative of the number of adherents to Islam. Due to war-related death, expulsion, and internal and external migration in the 1992-1995 aggression against B&H, the numbers and demographic distribution of ethnic groups have significantly changed.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a secular state with no state religion. In today’s post-war B&H, the increased presence of religion in the public arena is evident. Some welcome the religious revival as a healthy assertion of identity after the decades-long de-Islamization process that occurred during the communist period, while others see it as a rising threat to the secular and politically fragile state.

Annex 1 of the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina includes 15 main documents on human rights. The constitution states that the rights and freedoms set forth in the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental


ISLAMOPHOBIA IN BOSNIA HERZEGOVINA

Freedoms and its Protocols shall apply directly to Bosnia and Herzegovina. A special law providing for the freedom of religion and religious non-discrimination, as well as the legal status of churches and religious communities was adopted in 2004. This is the Law on Freedom of Religion and the Legal Position of Churches and Religious Communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina. According to this law everyone has the right to freedom of religion or belief, including the freedom to publicly profess, or not, a religion. Along with this, the Law on Prohibition of Discrimination was also adopted in 2009; according to this law discrimination on the grounds of religion and belief consists of any differential treatment, including any type of exclusion, limitation or preference based on real or assumed features towards any person or group of persons on grounds of religion or belief, and every other circumstance with a purpose or a consequence that inhibits or endangers recognition, enjoyment or realization of rights and freedoms in all areas of public life (Article 2.1).

Hate crime as a specific crime is motivated by intolerance towards certain groups in society. Some of the several criminal codes in B&H contain limited provisions that allow more severe punishment to be imposed for crimes committed with a motivation of bias. Use of these provisions is inconsistent and relatively rare. For example, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FB&H) and the Brčko District Criminal Codes include aggravated forms of some criminal acts, such as murder, rape, or causing grievous bodily injury when committed with a motivation of bias. The FB&H Criminal Code also includes an aggravated form of malicious mischief. Many laws on peace and public order at the cantonal level also include minor offences, punishable with a fine, which encompass insulting behavior based on national, racial, or religious grounds. The FB&H, Republika Srpska, and Brčko District Criminal Codes also include provisions on incitement to national, racial, or religious hatred, discord or hostility. According to OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe) B&H statistics hate crimes in B&H often target returnee communities (who are often isolated and vulnerable) and religious and sacred objects (mosques, churches, and graveyards), as well as private property belonging to returnees or members of minority communities. OSCE B&H also records hate crimes through the Hate Monitor. More than 85% of all hate crimes registered through the Hate Monitor are due to ethnicity/religion. Unfortunately, the statistics are not segregated by religion.

When it comes to hate speech regulations, the FB&H and Republika Srpska laws do not specifically proscribe hate speech, but prohibit acts that cause ethnic, racial, or religious hatred. Nevertheless, usage of incendiary language (in the media, by politicians, and others) usually goes unpunished.

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Islamophobic hate speech is particularly common online. To this date, no procedures have been initiated that would limit or sanction such activities. More information on hate speech in the media will be given in the report’s media section.

Some of the main events that sparked Islamophobic rhetoric in Bosnia and Herzegovina were related to elections and the so-called migrant crisis. First, the October general elections saw an orchestrated campaign aimed against the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina pursued by both Croatia and Serbia. This year saw a rise in anti-Bosnian rhetoric from Croatia while the attitude of Serbia remained the same as in 2017. Bosnia and Herzegovina is portrayed as a failed state which is a safe haven for terrorists. B&H entity Republika Srpska continued its separatist policy in 2018 announcing that it is preparing ground for succession and for eventually joining Serbia.

The second event is the rising so-called migrant crisis which which initially had not affected Bosnia and Herzegovina. Since Serbia and Hungary closed their borders, the migrants found their way through Bosnia and Herzegovina. In most cases, Serbian authorities encourage them to go to Bosnia and Herzegovina with the aim of easing the Serbian migrant issue. On the other hand, the migrants which the Croatian police capture are sent back over the border to Bosnia and Herzegovina. This influx of migrants was one of the main causes of Islamophobia and conspiracy theories pushed by the Bosnian Serb politicians and media.

Similarly to 2017, the Islamophobic rhetoric by political figures and media is on the rise. In relation to physical attacks, 2018 was a year in which attacks were lower than in previous years.

The following incidents were collected through media reports, direct reporting to the commission, and personal contacts. The Interreligious Council of B&H also published a report on the monitoring and the responses to attacks on religious buildings and other holy sites in B&H. When this report was being written, the data for 2018 had not yet been published.

Discussion of Islamophobic Incidents and Discursive Events

Physical and Verbal Attacks
On 7 January, two perpetrators threw pig intestines at a mosque in Bronzani Majdan near Banja Luka. Both of the perpetrators were apprehended by the police.

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9. I would like to thank Muhamed Jusić, Đermana Šeta and Nihad Mehmedović for their valuable information and insight.
10. However, Igor Kožemjakin from the Interreligious Council provided valuable information about registered attacks on people and property of the Islamic Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
17 January, the property of a Bosniak returnee in Sokolac, Hamed Vražalica, was destroyed in an arson attack.12

On 27 June, in Rogatica, a Bosniak returnee, Nedžad Herceglija, was attacked by his neighbor with an ax. Herceglija said that the intention behind this violent act was for him to leave his village Bjellogorići again. This hate crime committed by his neighbor who after swinging an ax toward Herceglija and his daughter, punched him. The attack happened a day before Eid, after Nedžad Herceglija and his daughter were returning from the mosque. Traumatized by this violent act, Herceglija has insomnia and experiences fear, while his daughter is seeing a psychologist after witnessing their neighbor pulling her father out of the car under threat of violence. This is the third time Herceglija has been attacked by his neighbors.13

On 4 March, the Hamidija Mosque in Mrkonjić Grad was vandalized by unknown perpetrators who threw rocks and broke two windows.14 On 26/27 April, an attack occurred at the central mosque in Zvornik. The same day a young Serb man (21) was detained for shattering the window of the mosque. He was accused of committing the common law offense of criminal damage.15

On 24 August, several shots were fired at the newly rebuilt Ferhadija Mosque in Banja Luka. Police apprehended Aleksandar Kopanja, whose gun was used in the attack. Kopanja, a man close to high-ranking Republika Srpska authorities, has apologized publicly and explained that the incident was a result of drinking. He was not in control of his gun and the person next to him took advantage of the opportunity.16

On 19 October, the mosque in Voljavica in Bratunac was vandalized. Perpetrators broke into the mosque, vandalized it, and stole a significant amount of money.17

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On 6 December, the Genocide Memorial in Višegrad was desecrated with red paint and eggs.18

**Employment**

It is worrying that the number of Bosniaks living and working in Republika Srpska is decreasing. For example, in Republika Srpska institutions, out of a total of 5,066 employees, only 43 are Bosniaks.19 This trend of Bosniaks leaving Republika Srpska is a result of the permanent local atmosphere and conditions that make Bosniak employees feel uncomfortable and discriminated.

The most troubling case in 2018 was the cognition that certain Bosniak members of the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina were receiving non-halal meat in their meals. Laboratory analysis showed that the meals given contained pork.20

**Education**

The year 2018 saw a continuity in denying Bosniak returnees the right to learn the Bosnian language in Republika Srpska. This is a serious violation of Bosniak children’s constitutional right to be taught as a “national group” in schools in the Serb-majority entity. As a result of this discrimination, in 2016, several Bosniak returnee communities refused to enroll their children in school. As a result, the Islamic Community provided temporary improvised schools where children are taught according to the national B&H curriculum and teachers are brought in from the Federation B&H.

The issue of discrimination in education is also visible in Croat-dominated areas where the concept of *two schools under one roof* exists. This is an apartheid-style segregation. In Kiseljak, for example, Bosniak and Croat children attend school separately.21

The Council (majlis) of the Islamic Community in Janja near Bijeljina reported that the Meša Selimović Elementary School forced Bosniak pupils to compensate school days for Eid holidays which is against state and entity laws, while Serb pupils do not need to compensate for Christmas.22

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22. The IC Commission on Freedom of Religion received this complaint.
Politics

In 2018, there was a rise in statements from local and regional political actors who used Islamophobic rhetoric to undermine Bosnia and Herzegovina and portray it as a radical Muslim safe haven. This was spearheaded by Bosnian Serb and Bosnian Croat politicians as well as Serbian and Croatian politicians. The most dangerous and concerning statement was given by Milorad Dodik, president of Bosnia and Herzegovina’s Serb-majority Republika Srpska, who said on a popular Serbian TV show that “imams in Bosnia who recite the adhan are howling.”23 This was the first public, dehumanizing statement given by the highest ranking Serb politician in post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina. Similarly, like in previous years, the B&H entity Republika Srpska, continued to undermine and disrespect state institutions. On a regional level, 2018 saw a rise in statements which portrayed B&H as a safe haven for radicals.

On 25 January, N1 published an article about Milorad Dodik’s interview for Serbian television Happy TV. Dodik called all Serbs who work in institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina as Turkifiers (poturice), which is a derogatory term for Bosniak Muslims. This caused outrage and reactions from the Bosnian Serb opposition parties who stated that Dodik should be “ashamed” for making such statements.24

On 24 March, Serbian tabloid Kurir published a video portraying Croatian parliamentarian Marijana Petir in the European Parliament talking about the threat of radicalization in Bosnia and Herzegovina and how such a movement is allegedly financed by other “Islamic” countries. Marijana Petir expressed her concern about the fact that Croatia has the longest border with B&H. She further says that not only young women are forced to wear hijab but men are encouraged to grow beards and pray.25

On 23 June, Vecernje novosti published Milorad Dodik’s statement that Bosniak politicians together with the Intelligence - Security Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina plan to bring 150,000 migrants to the country and that these migrants will get B&H citizenship. Furthermore, Dodik blamed the British government for supposedly trying to destabilize and create chaos in Republika Srpska.26

On 14 August, the National Assembly of the Republika Srpska dismissed the report of the Commission for Srebrenica from 2004. On the day, RS President Milorad Dodik

made an outrageous statement claiming that Bosniaks themselves planned the genocide with the aim of “satanizing” the Serbs and involving the United States in the war.27 Serbian Prime Minister Ana Brnabić in an interview given to DW stated that what occurred in Srebrenica was a “a hideous crime, it was a war crime” but not a genocide.28 Bosnian Croat politician Dragan Čović stated that the election of Željko Komišić as the Bosnian Croat member of the B&H presidency was successful due to the advocacy of imams in mosques and thus blamed members of the Islamic Community for his political loss.29

Media

The anti-Bosnian sentiment in the media was usually followed by Islamophobic rhetoric. The statements made in the media usually connected B&H, Bosniak politicians or former Army officers with radical extremism. These analytical statements were made by a group of already well-known self-proclaimed experts.

On 16 February, Croatian newspaper Slobodna Dalmacija published an article titled “What Is Going on in B&H? Dangerous Salafis Roam the Cities, They Hold Grenade Launchers in Their Cars, They Kidnap Girls: ‘My Wife Pulled Me into Radical Islam,’” which portrayed Bosnia as a unsecure and dangerous place.30(Fig. 1)

Figure 1: An article in Croatian newspaper Slobodna Dalmacija titled “What Is Going on in B&H? Dangerous Salafis Roam the Cities, They Hold Grenade Launchers in Their Cars, They Kidnap Girls: ‘My Wife Pulled Me into Radical Islam’”

31. Ibid.
On 23 March, the webportal “Network for Building Peace” republished the article “Why Is the Word Islamophobia Wrong?” This was previously published on the blog “Progressive Bosnia.” The author of the article not only claimed Islam is an ideology but also maintained that the term Islamophobia cannot be considered on the same level as racism, homophobia, and anti-Semitism.18

On 16 April, Deutsche Welle published a video and written report titled “Radicalization in Bosnia-Islamists Gaining Ground” about radicalization in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the influence of religious extremists. The documentary shows Bosnia and Herzegovina as a hub of Muslim radicals and portrays Arab tourists as a great problem for the country.34

On 5 May, the Radio Television of Republika Srpska (RTRS) published an article stating how Bosniaks are “taking over” Serb and Croat settlements in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The article stresses that almost 520 settlements are no longer populated by Serbs, while Croats lost their majority in 214 settlements.35

On 25 May, Croatian media outlet Vecernji list published an article on how migrants are registered in Mostar only because Bosniak politicians want to use them as a tool of domination over other people. Furthermore, Vecernji list states that the influx of migrants inflicts damage to the Croatian ethnic image. According to the text, the only reason migrants come to Mostar is so that they can disrupt the balance of the Croatian majority.36

On 23 August, Serbian media outlet Vecernje novosti published an article claiming that Bosniaks are fond of the fact that more migrants are coming to Bosnia and Herzegovina. The author wrote that the influx of immigrants is not accidental since the aim is to populate the country with Muslims. According to the article, the arrival of migrants is not due to their difficult situation at home but because of a plan by Bosnian politicians. The article also stated that it is alarming that three babies were born to migrant parents.37

Figure 3: Article by Večernje Novosti titled “It Suits the Bosniaks to Have More Migrants in Bosnia”38 (Source: Večernje Novosti).

On 23 August, the Serbian PRVA TV in its evening news broadcasted a story about the “Green Transversal” - a Serb propaganda about the unification of Muslims in the Balkans - a claim used by Serb nationalist leaders in order to justify the genocidal violence in the 1990s.39

38. Ibid.
On 11 October, *Glas Srpske* published an article stating that Bosniaks, two days before the elections, were instructed, in mosques, to vote for Bosniak presidential candidate Šefik Džaferović and Croat presidential candidate Željko Komšić. Allegations were made that the reason behind this tactic was to eliminate all legitimate Croatian representatives so that the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina can become a homogeneous Bosniak entity.40

On 17 October, Bosnian Croat politician Mario Karamatić alleged that Željko Komšić was elected as the Bosnian Croat member of the B&H presidency due to votes given to him by Islamic extremists who want to establish an Islamic state.41

Figure 4: A screenshot of the Serbian PRVA TV news report about the supposed “Green Transversal” in the Balkans.42

**Justice System**

On 7 April, the Municipal Court in Livno sentenced seven Croat men to one-year conditional sentence of imprisonment for causing “national, racial, and religious hatred.” In 2015, these seven men brought a gas tank in front of a mosque in Tomislavgrad and with curses and threats damaged several cars and physically attacked two local Bosniak men.43

In November, the court in Zagreb decreased the sentence of a wartime Bosnian Croat commander Marko Radić from 21 to 12.5 years in prison for crimes against humanity committed in Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina, in 1993 and 1994. The court in Zagreb lowered his sentence because the Croatian law does not recognize the concept of joint criminal enterprise. Thus, Radić, who was detained in 2006 and was supposed to stay behind bars until 2027, was released at the end of 2018.44

Internet
Social media remain the main source of anti-Muslim bigotry and Islamophobic rhetoric online. Several Facebook pages, mainly representing Serb nationalistic groups, published articles which spread fear of Bosniaks and included genocide denial. These social media pages remain the same as in previous years. Additionally, several Bosnian Croat web portals increased their anti-Bosniak discourse using Islamophobic rhetoric.

Central Figures in the Islamophobia Network
The central figures in spreading Islamophobia in B&H can be divided into three categories. First, the academic and semi-academic circles in Serbia and Republika Srpska, most notably Serbian “experts” on security, terrorism, and Islam (such as Predrag Ceranić, Miroljub Jevtić, Dževad Galijašević, and Darko Trifunović). Second, several high-ranking officials from the Serb Orthodox Church such as Bishops Amfilohije and Kačavenda, and Patriarch Irinej, who have made nationalistic comments. The third category is politicians and include local Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats, such as Milorad Dodik and Mario Karamatić as well as Croatian and Serbian politicians such as Ana Brnabić and Marijana Petir. In the majority of cases, these are elected MPs in the parliamentary assemblies. These political subjects give statements which are anti-Muslim and Islamophobic aimed at Bosniak Muslims and their political and religious establishments.

Observed Civil Society and Political Assessment and Initiatives
The Commission on Freedom of Religion (Komisija za slobodu vjere) is a commission of the Islamic Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina which is active in helping secure religious freedoms and battling Islamophobia. Members of the commission took an active role in monitoring cases of violation of religious freedoms and have provided legal advice to several appellants.

On 25 July, Grand Mufti Husein Kavazović attended the conference “Minist-riatal to Advance Religious Freedom” in Washington, at the invitation of Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. The aim of this conference was to contribute to the promotion of religious tolerance and freedom of religion or belief. Grand Mufti Husein Ka-
vazović talked about the dangers of hate speech and Islamophobia and how they can harm Bosnia and Herzegovina.45

Other NGOs also took part in similar activities. A Facebook page titled “Ne u moje ime” (Not in my name) was started by Radio Free Europe as a “dialog about radicalism and extremism in the real world”; however, some of their work is question-able since it only deals with Muslim “issues.”46 NGO Nahla held several training sessions for young people about monitoring Islamophobia. In December, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) held a workshop for young professionals from the Balkans on improving identification and reporting of hate crimes against Muslims.47

Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

In 2018, the number of Islamophobic attacks on people and property was lower than in 2017. Similarly to 2017, there was an overall increase in regional political anti-Bosniak and anti-Muslim activities. Bosnia and Herzegovina was once again presented as an unstable state which harbors extremists. This rhetoric was spear-headed by the Serbian and Croatian political establishments and certain regional political figures.

Considering the state of Islamophobia in Bosnia and Herzegovina the following policy recommendations can be made to combat Islamophobia effectively:

• Cooperation between governments (state level, entity level, and district Brčko level), the Islamic Community, and NGOs in fighting discrimination against Muslims should be fostered.
• Public awareness on human rights and freedom of religion and belief should be raised by NGOs, media, etc.
• The methods of documentation of cases of violation of the rights of Muslims should be enhanced by the Islamic Community, NGOs, the police, and judiciary.

46. Ne U Mojeime, Facebook, https://www.facebook.com/pg/RSE.NeUMojeIme/about/?ref=page_internal (Access date: 2 September 2019).
• Awareness of hate crimes against Muslims, and their proper registration and prosecution should be raised by the Islamic Community, NGOs, the police, and judiciary.
• Awareness of hate speech (online and offline) by media, politicians, etc. should be raised.
• Awareness about Islamic practice (prayer, jumaah, and the headscarf) and available ways to accommodate this in education and employment should be raised. Regulations should be adjusted accordingly.
• Laws that stipulate that public officers or officials “shall refrain from public manifestation of their religious beliefs,” which discriminate against Muslim employees in fasting, taking a break for daily prayers, or wearing the headscarf, should be amended. The most flagrant cases should be referred to the HJPC (High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council).
• Awareness of citizens and NGOs about reporting offensive media language to the Press Council in B&H and the Communications Regulatory Agency should be raised.
• Awareness of citizens and NGOs about filing complaints related to human rights violations to the B&H Ombudsman’s office, the Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees, and in regular courts should be raised.
• Commitment to countering violent extremism, but not at the expense of freedom of religion and not solely focusing on Islam or Muslims, should be developed.

Chronology
• 07.01.2018: Two perpetrators threw pig intestines at a mosque in Bronzani Majdan.
• 17.01.2018: The property of a Bosniak returnee in Sokolac, Hamed Vražalica, was destroyed in an arson attack.
• 25.01.2018: Milorad Dodik called all Serbs working in institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina “Turkifiers” (poturice).
• 04.03.2018: The Hamidija Mosque in Mrkonjić Grad was vandalized by unknown perpetrators who threw rocks and broke two windows.
• 24.03.2018: Croatian parliamentarian Marijana Petir accused Bosnia and Herzegovina of being financed by “Islamic” countries.
• 26/27.05.2018: An attack occurred at the central mosque in Zvornik.
• 07.05.2018: The Municipal Court in Livno sentenced seven Croat men to a one-year conditional sentence of imprisonment for causing “national, racial, and religious hatred.”
• 27.06.2018: Bosniak returnee in Rogatica, Nedžad Herceglija, was attacked by his neighbor with an ax.
• **19.07.2018**: Milorad Dodik stated that “imams in Bosnia who recite the adhan are howling.”

• **24.08.2018**: Several shots were fired at the newly rebuilt Ferhadija Mosque in Banja Luka.

• **19.10.2018**: The mosque in Voljavica in Bratunac was vandalized.

• **15.11.2018**: Ana Brnabić in an interview given to DW stated that what occurred in Srebrenica was not a genocide.

• **06.12.2018**: The Genocide Memorial in Višegrad was desecrated with red paint and eggs.