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Subject: Letter by the the Association of Detainees and the Association of Families of Missing Persons of Sarajevo and the Middle Podrinje / Srebrenica Region as a reaction to the article published on December 12, 2021 in Haaretz daily newspaper entitled *Jews Can't Let the Genocide Deniers Win* authored by Esther Solomon

Dear Mr. Benn,

We, the undersigned organizations, the Association of Detainees and the Association of Families of Missing Persons of Sarajevo and the Middle Podrinje / Srebrenica Region, would like to express our deepest concerns and drew your attention to the fact that your daily newspaper has been telling horrible untruths about the facts of the civil war in Bosnia and Herzegovina for a long time, which are causing among our people great pain and consequently deepening the war trauma of the Serbian victims of the war. Hence, we would like to alarm that a continuous information warfare is taking place with the use of your newspaper aiming at achieving geopolitical goals, and also would like to manifest our protest in regard to the media campaign carried out by some authors publishing their articles and opinions in Haaretz daily newspaper (such as: *Jews Can't Let the Genocide Deniers Win*; *Dangerous New Crisis Brewing in the Balkans. And Israel is Involved*; *'There's No Genocide Denial': Bosnian-Serb leader's Heated Talk with Haaretz on Srebrenica*; *Prepping for Secession – or War: Who will stop Bosnia's Serb separatists?*; *Abusing the Holocaust to deny genocide: The Serb 'truth commissions' and their Israeli helpers*; *'Destabilize the Balkans': Bosnia protests German award to Israeli Holocaust historian* etc.) as it overtly and aggressively 1) hinders the post-war reconciliation and peaceful coexistence efforts in Bosnia and Herzegovina; 2) misleads the HAARETZ readers in regard to historical and contemporary developments not only in BiH, but related to Holocaust and international terrorism by distorting and mispresenting some historical facts and silencing others 3) denies historical justice for the Serbian victims of the Civil war in Bosnia and Herzegovina and participating in attempts of Holocaust distortion which is highly embarrassing for a representative of a people surviving the greatest genocide in history – the Holocaust 4) on one hand, demonizes Serbs by attributing to their behavior forms of racism aiming at equating them with Nazi, and, on the other, overwhelmingly victimizes Bosniak sufferings making attempts to equating their sufferings with the Jewish during WWII which is a form of Holocaust distortion.



The above-mentioned article is filled with stereotypes and war propaganda narratives and terminology of the Muslim Brotherhood¹, embodied in the SDA political party, and is far from any objective and balanced assessment of historical events that took place during the Civil War in Bosnian and Herzegovina. The intentional misrepresentations and distortions of the historical facts used as a supporting evidence and main theses of the article directly correspond to the approach of the Qatari media platform Al Jazeera. The recently deceased Hasan Čengić, who is on the US blacklist due to his direct ties to global radical Islamist structures, and one of the most prominent figures of the Muslim Brotherhood in this part of Europe, directly participated in founding the Balkan office of Al Jazeera (Al Jazeera Balkans).

The above-mentioned narrative and the article itself, which is based on it, denies non-Muslim victims in BiH, ie mass and systematic war crimes organized, ordered and committed by the political and military leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood (SDA). Some of the consequences of this terror during the Civil war in BiH is that in Sarajevo, as the capital, the historical Christian Serb community was completely destroyed. Prior to the war Serbs made up 30% of Sarajevo population, and today they make up not more than 2.5% of the total population in Sarajevo. Thousands of Serb women have been victims of systematic rape. Over 800 Serb citizens have disappeared in the Muslim part of Sarajevo. Even today, we are looking for over 250 of them because the Muslim authorities in Sarajevo are obstructing in every way the finding of our family members².

At least 211 camps, prisons and places of detention for Serbs in Sarajevo have been registered³.

Thousands and thousands of civilians, citizens of Serbian nationality in the part of Sarajevo under Muslim control, were put in camps and detained where they went through unimaginable forms of torture. Some of them can be compared to the experience that ISIL victims had several years ago. Serbs who remained in their apartments and houses in the Muslim-controlled part of Sarajevo were held hostage by the Muslim Brotherhood local structures (SDA) as they were not allowed to leave this part of the city⁴.

As a civilian, I, Vinko Lale, was a detainee in the Silos camp! One of the many camps under the control of the structures of the Muslim Brotherhood (SDA) in which about 650 Serb citizens were concentrated and imprisoned without trial, tortured and killed in Sarajevo. This camp was disbanded after enormous pressure from the international community several months after the signing of the peace agreement in Dayton, USA. It is the last camp in Europe,

¹ The Muslim Brotherhood's ideology penetrated into the Bosnian Muslim community in the interwar period through the El-Hidaje, a Muslim political-religious association and Young Muslims, established in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the 1930s and acting for a certain period of time as a El-Hidaje's youth section. The organizations were based on the Egyptian Brotherhood's ideology, organizational structure and modus operandi, operated as such and had close links with the global Brotherhood structures from its outset. Its core members were Bosnian graduates from the Al-Azhar University in Cairo, who had joined the Brotherhood while they were studying there. Its goal was the creation of an Islamic state in the Balkans. One of the leading members of the Young Muslims was Alija Izetbegović, who elaborated his vision in his Pan-Islamic radical political program called the Islamic Declaration, which subsequently became the political program of his political party SDA, the core of which was consisted of the former Young Muslims members.

² <https://www.incomfis-sarajevo.org/crime-scene/>; <https://www.incomfis-sarajevo.org/mass-graves/>; <https://www.incomfis-sarajevo.org/kazani-pit/>

³ <https://www.incomfis-sarajevo.org/mapping/>

⁴ <https://www.incomfis-sarajevo.org/documents/>



disbanded on January 27, 1996, 51 years after Auschwitz. It is a shame to deny our suffering and so shamelessly mock our traumas!⁵

It is true that also other civilians were generally not allowed to leave this part of the city by the military formations controlled by the Muslim Brotherhood local structures (SDA). It was the so-called inner ring that prevented the civilian population from leaving this part of the city. There are a huge number of cases where Serb citizens have been killed in an attempt to flee part of Sarajevo under the control of the Muslim Brotherhood domestic structures.

Other non-Muslims (members of the Christian Croat community) faced the same kind of treatment. Between 20,000 and 25,000 of them fled the part of Sarajevo under Muslim control through the territory of the city under Serbian control. Although Croats cooperated with the Muslim party in certain phases of the civil war, that did not save them from mujahedin crimes and ritual beheadings.

Furthermore, also those Muslim professing traditional Islam who had their own territory and political-military administration in northwestern Bosnia and Herzegovina during the civil war and who did not want a war conflict with non-Muslims shared the same destiny. They had been horribly killed and tortured and eventually demolished by their more radical brothers in faith. In this context, and in regard to evacuations, it should be mentioned that although the Serbs allowed the organization of the Blue Roads, they were often banned by Izetbegović. One of the well-known examples is Boško and Admira (Sarajevo's Romeo and Juliet), whom the Serbs allowed to cross, and the Muslims killed them on the Vrbanja bridge. A parallel can be made with Srebrenica, where Oric also banned the evacuation of civilians.

The author mentions a figure of 1,600 children killed in Sarajevo, which is a propaganda number (even Emir Suljagić, the Director of the Srebrenica Genocide Memorial states a smaller number in media articles). Even their Institute for War Research listed a smaller number of children killed in its book, even though they included underage fighters. In addition, it was stated that most of the children were killed by snipers, which is absolutely not true. Namely, in the mentioned study of the Institute, it is stated that 8% were killed by snipers, which does not mean that all of them were killed by "Serbian snipers". Also, the number of children killed stated by them is questionable.

Further, the number of 5,400 killed civilians, for which we do not know whether these include 1,600 killed children and what particular sources it was taken from, is debatable. Namely, according to Sarajevo, that number is changeable and adapts to specific needs. It varies from 4,000 to 11,000, which you will agree is not a small variation.

The author states that there was a large community of Jews on the territory of today's BiH, so it should be pointed out that the same community was destroyed during the Independent State of Croatia by Ustashas and Muslims. And it seems that the attitude of Muslims towards Jews has not changed to this day, as evidenced by pictures from the BiH-Israel match a few years ago where they burned the Israeli flag, on which they put a swastika instead of the Star of David, paradoxically equating Jews with Nazis, as they refer to them in many Bosniak medias as fascists regarding their actions towards the Palestinians. Also, when the Sarajevo

⁵ https://twitter.com/INCOMFIS_SA/status/1436330339505422339



musician Zelimir Altarac Cicak of Jewish origin passed away, a swastika was drawn on his death certificates in Sarajevo.

All this is kept silent in the article you published. Is it a denial of crimes and a distortion of history?

The above-mentioned style differs drastically from the approach of the two independent international commissions you have mentioned, which approached the topics from an academic and serious research point of view, taking into account the suffering of all peoples in the civil war in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Another obvious example of the distortion of history practice is the use by the author the narrative of the so-called *siege* of Sarajevo. According to all criteria described in internationally established and applied definitions for the term *siege*, Sarajevo experienced a *blockade* rather than a *siege*, a conclusion that was made by the International Independent Commission on Sarajevo⁶. VRS Main Staff documents and the Sarajevo-Romanija Corps used the professional term blockade, while for PR purposes ARBiH and media used the historical term siege, which was professionally and historically misplaced. The main difference between *siege* and *blockade* is the choice of weapons by the attacking side. Historically, starvation has been the main weapon of a siege. However, because of the international relief effort and massive deliveries of humanitarian aid allowed by the VRS into Sarajevo, Sarajevo experienced no hunger, the primary weapon of any siege. UNPROFOR control of the airport (29 June 1992) made it possible to establish a humanitarian air bridge, which, though frequently interrupted, operated throughout the entire war. In this sense, the siege of Sarajevo cannot stand any comparison with the siege of Leningrad between 1941 and 1944, and the siege of Sebastopol between 1941 and 1942. The siege of Leningrad by German, Finnish, and Spanish forces in WWII resulted in the deaths of up to about 1,500,000 soldiers and civilians due to starvation and bombardment.

Populistically speaking, about the alleged siege of Sarajevo have witnessed the fact that the Bruce Dickinson's concert was held there on December 14, 1994, which is not the only example.

Subsequently, the numbers of victims in Sarajevo are being taken from the same narrative of the so-called *siege* of Sarajevo, which number have been disputed by many researchers and experts, including by some Bosniak researchers.

Also speaking about the total number of victims in BiH, the number of 100,000 victims is mentioned, where it is silent that almost a third of that number (three peoples participating in the civil war, including several factions among Muslims) belong to Serb victims who were killed by Muslim and Croat formations. Thus, as in the entire text, the reader is brought into propaganda one-sided depictions and delusions, and indirectly the Serbian side is exclusively accused to be responsible for all the victims, even from its own people. The article also tries to portrait the Serbs as foreign aggressor, someone who came from abroad to harass the domicile

⁶ General Conclusions of the Concluding Report of the International Independent Commission of Inquiry of Sufferings of Serbs in Sarajevo between 1991 to 1995. Pg.1002. Available at: <https://www.incomfis-sarajevo.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/General%20conclusions%20-%20English.pdf>



Muslim population, meaning the propaganda about the alleged aggression continues, even though Serbs have been living in BiH for centuries.

In the article, on one hand, prejudices about Muslims are pointed out, and on the other the author keeps silent about foreign Islamist fanatics and mujahedin from the Arab world who fought in BiH and who committed horrific crimes. Thus, nowhere in the text can you find an example of a nine-year-old Serbian girl Mirjana Dragicevic who was raped and killed by three members of the 7th Muslim Brigade in front of her mother, who was wounded several times, and her brother, who hid and watched the cruel act. This cruel event, unfortunately, only one of numerous of such kind that took place during the terrible civil war, occurred in the municipality of Ilijas near Sarajevo. In the text as mentioned, there is no place for Serb victims as well as the ritual killings and beheadings committed by foreign and domestic Islamist fanatics and mujahedin in BiH.

Non a word was said about the formation of the El Mudžahid Detachment as an official unit of the Seventh Muslim Brigade of the Third Corps of the Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina consisting of foreign terrorist fighters from all around the world, as well as their modus operandi, methods of propaganda dissemination, and links to international terrorist organizations, which reveal the character and the nature of the Civil War in Bosnia and Herzegovina from the point of view of the Muslim political and religious elite in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Alija Izetbegović, the SDA and the Bosnian ulama). Consequently, in their eyes the Civil War in Bosnia and Herzegovina was undoubtedly a jihad for liberating Muslim lands from the infidels and establishing an Islamic State based on Sharia law in the Western Balkans. ARBiH was created as a tool of SDA and Islamized, and as such it was solidly mono-ethnic and Muslim, and therefore had no moral right to claim the task to secure national and social equality of all three RBiH nations. The political activity and the struggle to establish an Islamized state as a result of the Civil War in Bosnia and Herzegovina conducted by the Muslim political and religious leadership in Bosnia and Herzegovina was inspired by the Muslim Brotherhood ideology, the Iranian revolution and the creation of the Islamic Pakistani state.

The author forgot to mention the tremendous support the Muslim party enjoyed during the war. In this war Bosnian Muslims were supported by Islamic states (primarily Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Qatar), global Islamic NGOs, trans-national banks and companies, intelligence services, international terrorist organizations, radical Islamic groups and so on. During the Civil War in BiH in 90s, radical Islamic regimes, notably the Wahhabis of Saudi Arabia, Iranian Shi'ites, and terrorist movements as Al-Qa'ida, have used the Civil War to send in mujahedin and to train Bosniak scholars to lead radical groups in Sarajevo and across Bosnia, in close collaboration with Alija Izetbegovic and his closest collaborators and associates, representing the core of the SDA party and today holding high positions in Bosnia's military, defense, diplomatic and executive branches were linked with Islamic countries, Islamic terrorist organizations and extremist groups, the Brotherhood network in order to support jihad in Bosnia for the establishment of independent Islamic state as a result of the war.

The developments during the Civil War in Bosnia and Herzegovina paved the way for the development and expansion of the contemporary regional terrorist infrastructure in the heart



of Europe which de facto represents the cornerstone of the so called Balkan Caliphate, whose operational base consists of the “paradžemati” network, the Wahhabi settlements, the military terrorist camps, the constantly increasing network new mosques and Islamic schools, the regional network of international Islamic NGOs and international Islamic financial institutions, and Muslim political parties. Today, Alija Izetbegović’s son, Bakir Izetbegović, the SDA, and the Bosnian Islamic Religious Community headed by Husein-ef. Kavazović (having as his advisor for international cooperation the former reisu-l-ulema Mustafa Cerić) continued to implement his vision and maintain strong connections with the Global Muslim Brotherhood, as well as with international terrorist organizations, such as Al-Qa’ida, Hamas, ISIS and others.

Also, by clearly aiming at analogies with the Holocaust, the article pursues to influence the sensitivity of readers in Israel. Exactly the same was done by the Muslims during the civil war in BiH. Namely, they used parallels with the Holocaust for its own political purposes, and such practices which they conduct even today directly contributes to the distortion of the Holocaust discrediting significantly the scale of it by comparison with the developments in Srebrenica in particular and in other parts during the war, in general.

In the context of false arguments and statements regarding the Srebrenica developments, it is important to underline that a photograph of Mejra Djogaz is included in the article. She states that her husband and three sons died in Srebrenica, and decides not to mention a small detail - that all four of them were members of the so-called ARBiH. The number of such cases is alarming.

Another such example would be the lie about forcing Muslims in Prijedor to wear white ribbons in the image of Jews in Nazi Germany. Such an event has never, I repeat, ever happened. What really happened was that after the attack on the military structures of the Muslim Brotherhood (SDA) on Prijedor and the crimes they committed, in the counter-offensive of the Republika Srpska armed forces, which included a significant number of Muslims and Croats, the local radio station ordered because of street fights everyone to put on their balconies or windows white canvas/ sheet in order to make it known that there live are citizens loyal to the Republika Srpska. There is more than solid evidence for this. Everything else is war-political propaganda, but also a form of Holocaust distortion, because it directly insinuates the connection with the destiny of European Jewry during the Holocaust.

Although in the article it is mentioned that the Muslim part of Sarajevo is participating in the Holocaust commemoration today, but at the same time it was not stated that today, after the Holocaust, that schools and streets are named after members of the Muslim Brotherhood and Nazi collaborators in the Muslim Brotherhood (SDA)-controlled part of BiH. They even glorify the crimes of the Muslim and Croatian Usthas in the Independent State of Croatia, the ideological role of the Mufti of Jerusalem El Hussein, the 13th SS Hanjar Division, etc. in the crimes of the Holocaust and the genocides against Serbs and Roma committed in the Independent State of Croatia, a parexellan satellite and ally of the Third Reich. Thus, a triple genocide was committed in the Independent State of Croatia, and Muslim elites and a large part of social strata carried out, supported or peacefully observed the same processes, especially in the early years of the war.



Further, in the article the author mentions the denial of the Srebrenica genocide, while again denying the thousands of Serb victims of ethnic cleansing in the area (over 800km²) committed by Islamist armed formations controlled by Muslim Brotherhood (SDA) structures.

The Independent International Commission of Inquiry of Suffering of All Peoples in the Srebrenica Region from 1992-1995 is composed of 10 internationally prominent experts, each leading figure in his field of expertise, coming from all five continents⁷. The Independent International Commission carried out a thorough investigation about the sufferings of all peoples in the region to the extent possible, and presented its main findings to the public.⁸

The Commission expert who was in charge of the criminal aspect of the reconstruction of the event is a police general, former commander of the special forces for the fight against the terrorist organization Boko Haram, a Muslim by religion⁹.

The expert team of this Commission came to a scientifically established fact that in July 1995 in Srebrenica during a military breakthrough operation by the 28th Muslim Division of the ARBiH, and mostly basing this finding on a large number of statements by this formation soldiers given to their security organs. In the battles with the Serb forces 4-5,000 members of this formation were killed. At the same time, a minimum of 1,500 and a maximum of 3,000 of this formation soldiers surrendered to Serb forces.

In the next 2-4 days, the vast majority of these prisoners of war were executed during their transport to the destination from where further exchange was to be organized. Several hundred of them were subsequently exchanged. In any case, the maximum number of prisoners corresponds to the maximum number of executions. All ten Commission members, including experts in international and humanitarian law, agreed that the ad hoc shooting of several thousand prisoners of war did not qualify as genocide, as defined by the UN. This is the scientific and professional position of the researchers, which corresponds to the views of the world's leading experts on this issue, including Professor Yehuda Bauer, who is mentioned in the article. This does not mean that anyone denies the terrible crime that happened, but only that there is a different expert opinion and attitude when it comes to qualifying a specific crime. The fact that, on one hand, the structures of the Muslim Brotherhood (SDA) in Bosnia and Hercegovina do not allow any scientific and professional research of and discussion about these events, and, on the other, simultaneously deny completely the non-Muslim (Serb) victims, speaks for itself.

At the same time, when it comes to the Republika Srpska, its institutions and political representatives, it can be stated that no representative of the Serbian people and institutions of the Republika Srpska denies the crime committed against the prisoners of war - the members of the 28th Division - in July 1995, but they constantly condemn and call on judicial institutions to prosecute those responsible for crimes on all sides. At the same time, the Republika Srpska insists on the freedom for professional and academic views to be expressed advocating that this crime cannot be qualified as genocide. The findings of the Srebrenica Commission oblige

⁷ <https://incomfis-srebrenica.org/members/>

⁸ <https://incomfis-srebrenica.org/mapping/>

⁹ <https://incomfis-srebrenica.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Srebrenica%20Commission%20report%20-%20English%20lan.pdf#page=277>



everybody in the Republika Srpska to admit that these crimes took place in history, in the context of the reconciliation and peaceful coexistence efforts in BiH, and to launch a historical process of dealing with the past and initiating a sincere and responsible dialogue for reconciliation.

Furthermore, the author is trying to declare the Republika Srpska to be "anti-Bosniak", so she should be told that about 19% of Bosniaks live in the Republika Srpska and have many Muslim/Bosniak ministers in its Government, while about 3% of Serbs live in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina after their ethnic cleansing.

Once again, we would like to draw your attention to the point that all facts about the civil war in Bosnia and Herzegovina that are presented in your paper are one-sided and insult all non-Muslim victims of the war and their families in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Why do you present a narrative that directly corresponds to the one produced and circulated by the structures of the Muslim Brotherhood in Bosnia and Herzegovina is a question that should be addressed by someone else.

We expect this letter to be published in your newspaper.

Vinko Lale, Association of Detainees

Milka Kovacic, Association of Families of Missing Persons