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CHALLENGES AND  
TEMPTATIONS: DEBATES AND  
REACTIONS OF THE ISLAMIC  
COMMUNITY TO THE WAR IN  
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA  
BETWEEN 1992 AND 1995

H i k m e t K a r č i ć

Introduction

The Socialist Federal Republic Yugoslavia (SFRJ) had a centralized Islamic Community (hereinafter IC, *Islamska vjerska zajednica*) responsible for the affairs of Muslims in Yugoslavia. The structure and organization of the IC was modified and expanded from the original idea initiated and implemented by the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1882 in Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H).<sup>1</sup> During the socialist regime, there were three main institutions of the IC: the office of the *Reis-ul-ulema*, the leader of the IC; *Vrhovni sabor* – the IC Assembly and the *Vrhovno islamsko starešinstvo* – the main executive body of the IC.<sup>2</sup> The last Constitution of the IC was adopted in 1990 and it provided organizational divisions within the Republics of Yugoslavia. The Reis-ul-ulema of the IC was Jakub ef. Selimovski, a Muslim from Macedonia, who was officially elected by the main authority, the *Vrhovni sabor* in March 1991 although he was in this position since mid-1990s.

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<sup>1</sup> For a summary of Islam in Bosnia and Herzegovina see: Aid Smajić and Muhamed Fazlović, “Bosnia and Herzegovina,” *Yearbook of Muslims in Europe*, Volume 7, ed. Oliver Scharbrodt, Samim Akgönül, Ahmet Alibašić, Jørgen S. Nielsen and Egdūnas Račius, 114–129 (Brill, 2015); Fikret Karčić, “The Office of Rais al-Ulama Among the Bosniaks (Bosnian Muslims),” *Intellectual Discourse*, Vol 5, No 2 (1997): 109–120.

<sup>2</sup> For more about the IC see: Mustafa Imamović, “Islamska zajednica u Bosni i Hercegovini i bivšoj Jugoslaviji,” *Glasnik* 1-2 (1992): 90.

Soon after, Slovenia and Croatia declared independence and the war broke out. The war in Slovenia ended after ten days but the war in Croatia was a brutal one which lasted several months ending in a status quo with Croatia being divided into two parts – one controlled by the official state and the other by Serbian separatists. After several months of political unrest, B&H declared independence on 1<sup>st</sup> March 1992. Soon the war broke out with the Yugoslav People's Army (YPA) along with Serbian paramilitaries conducting a genocidal campaign throughout B&H. The war officially started on 6<sup>th</sup> April 1992 when the Užice Corps of the YPA attacked different towns along the Drina River. Sarajevo was instantly bombarded and fired by snipers. Sarajevo was attacked with full force on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1992 with the aim of dividing the city into two parts. After this unsuccessful attack, the city was placed under full siege and all water, electricity and gas shut off. The Bosnian Serbs, who boycotted the referendum, formed their own rebel army with the help of the YPA called the Republika Srpska Army. The Bosnian Serb authorities started a genocidal campaign to get rid of the Muslim and Croat populations in B&H. These military actions became infamously known as 'ethnic cleansing'.

Throughout the country, imams as the religious leaders in their local communities were targeted. Several dozen imams were executed, while dozens were rounded up in concentration camps and tortured.<sup>3</sup> Sarajevo was placed under siege and its citizens subjected to sniper fire and indiscriminate bombardment. Several hundred mosques were destroyed or damaged by the Republika Srpska Army.<sup>4</sup>

Along with its fellow citizens, the IC officials and employees shared the same fate in the besieged city. As a result of the war, the IC was limited in its work since there was a physical barrier – the siege – between the IC and the rest of the IC institutions called the *majlises* (organizational structure of IC per town) and *muftiates* (mufti offices, eight in total in B&H). However, the IC institutions continued functioning

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<sup>3</sup> Muharem Omerdić, *Prilozi izucavanju genocida nad Bosnjacima* (Sarajevo: El-Kalem, 1999).

<sup>4</sup> At least 600 mosques were destroyed by the Republika Srpska Army and Croatian Defense Council from 1992–1995. The YPA officially 'left' B&H on 19 May 1992, but in reality it was just renamed into the Republika Srpska Army.

throughout the territories which were under the control of the BH Government. In Sarajevo, the IC had three important media institutions which continued to function in 1992: The Preporod newspaper (The Revival), a biweekly newspaper published since the 1979's; The *Glasnik* newspaper (The Herald), the official herald of the IC and *MINA*, the Muslim Informative News Agency, founded prior to the independence of B&H with the aim of informing the public about news from the IC and Muslim communities in B&H.

This article will focus on the reaction of the IC and Bosniak intellectuals through the writings of the *Glasnik* newspaper. The emphasis will be on the year 1992 as well as important decisions, fatwas and religious opinion given by Muslim authorities related to questions and dilemmas faced by Bosniaks in the first year of the war. Writings of other, above mentioned publications have been partially covered in some works, but the content of the *Glasnik* newspaper, to our knowledge, was not.<sup>5</sup>

### The Herald of the Islamic Community

The Herald of the Islamic Community (*Glasnik Islamske zajednice*) is the official publication of the IC in B&H. The Herald was established in 1933 by the IC Executive in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia which was based in Belgrade.<sup>6</sup> The IC moved back to Sarajevo in 1936 where the *Glasnik* newspaper continued to be published until 1945. This was due to the end of the Second World War and the establishment of the Communist regime. The *Glasnik* newspaper was reactivated in the 1950s and has been published ever since. It is an important publication of the IC because ever since its establishment it has had two parts: the academic part where *ulama* including the Reis-ul-ulema published ar-

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<sup>5</sup> For an analysis of some articles from the Preporod newspaper, see: Dino Abazović et al, "Ethno-Mobilization and the Organized Production of Violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina - Conscious Preparations." EURAC, 2007. <http://www.eurac.edu/en/research/autonomies/minrig/Documents/Mirico/Bosnia%20and%20Herzegovina%20Report.pdf>. Harun Karčić in his M.A. "Islamic Revival in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Foreign factors, their activities, and the reaction of the Islamic Community" which was defended in the University of Bologna also analysed writing in Preporod.

<sup>6</sup> Zejnil Fajić, *Bibliografija »GLASNIKA« Vrhovnog islamskog starješinstva u SFRJ od 1933. do 1982. godine* (Sarajevo: Vrhovno islamsko starešinstvo u SFRJ, 1983), 5–6.

ticles, and the official part where official statements, decisions, instructions, directives, decrees and other are published.

Prior to the war of 1992, the Glasnik newspaper was a respectable publication published six times a year – twice every two months.<sup>7</sup> It had summaries of academic articles in English and Arabic languages and a modern design. Apart from the academic and official parts, the newspaper also contained a “Question and Answer” part where readers could ask religion-related questions and received answers from religious authorities.

### On the Brink of War

The first issue of the Glasnik newspaper was published in March 1992 and its content did not differ much from the previous issues. This issue contained several small press releases from the IC: an appeal from the IC regarding the referendum on independence of B&H which stated “Since these are moments of ‘to be or not to be’ for Bosnia and Herzegovina and for the Muslim people, we appeal to all Muslims to show a high level of conscience and seriousness and to appear at the referendum. If we fail this exam, history will not, for long, give us this opportunity to make-up”<sup>8</sup>. Another news report gives information about the meeting of the Sabor (IC Assembly). The report stated that almost half of the members of the Assembly were not able to attend because of the severe political tensions. The Assembly also noted that they will issue an appeal to the public to vote at the referendum.<sup>9</sup> However, the next issue, published in mid-1992 clearly showed the shock of war and crime-related texts.<sup>10</sup> This double-issue contained articles written by Bosniak intellectuals such as “Genocide in the Light of Qur’anic Regulative” by Enes Karić; “A Crime Which Lasts” by Aziz Kadribegović; “War Crimes

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<sup>7</sup> The editor of Glasnik from 1990 until the end of 1992 was Fikret Karčić. See: Zejnil Fajić, *Bibliografija Glasnika Vrhovnog islamskog starješinstva u SFRJ i Rijaseta Islamske zajednice u SFRJ od 1983. do 1992. godine* (Sarajevo: Rijaset Islamske Zajednice u Republici Bosni i Hercegovini, 1995), 253.

<sup>8</sup> Glasnik, 1992, 105.

<sup>9</sup> Glasnik, 1992, 103.

<sup>10</sup> Glasnik, 1992, 107–191.

in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1992 with a Special Emphasis on the Suffering of Civilian Population in Concentration Camps and Prisons” by Smail Čekić; “Destroyed and Damaged Religious Buildings of the Islamic Community in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina during the Aggression of 1992” by Muharem Omerdić and finally “The Break-down of Yugoslavia and the Question of Organization of the Islamic Community” by Fikret Karčić. All of these articles were a reflection of the state that the IC, the country and Muslims were at that crucial moment.

This issue also contained a “Question and Answer” section as well as official IC press releases. One press release mentioned the attacks on mosques in the towns under the control of the Bosnian Serb authorities. Another press release dealt with the attacks on the Muslim population in Zvornik and included an open letter from Reis Selimovski to the Patriarch of the Serb Orthodox Church asking him to react to the killings in Zvornik and to the armed attacks on B&H.<sup>11</sup> Another open letter to the Patriarch was again sent by Muharem Omerdić, as a representative of the IC. The letter contained a list of six members of the IC who went missing during the Serb attack on Bosnian towns.<sup>12</sup> The next report dated 23.06.1992 is the Instructions for all IC committees in B&H stating that all destruction and damages on IC infrastructure must be evidenced in a serious manner for the future use in courts and trials. This shows a high level of consciousness of IC authorities regarding war crimes cases of the time. However, the reality was much more difficult in conducting these instructions. The third letter was again sent to Patriarch Pavle on 1.7.1992 signed by Reis Selimovski urging him to condemn crimes while raising concern why he had not done that so far. Selimovski once again gives a list of IC employees who were missing.<sup>13</sup> Another press release dated 30.7.1992 containing an appeal to international organizations and the international community to pressure the Bosnian Serb Army to release 22 imams who were held in concentration camps.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Glasnik, 1995, “Poglavaru Srpske pravoslavne crkve,” 173.

<sup>12</sup> This letter was dated 20.6.1992.

<sup>13</sup> Glasnik, 1992, 181.

<sup>14</sup> Glasnik, 1992, 182.

Probably the only non-Bosnian related report in this issue of the Glasnik newspaper is a letter from Reis Selimovski to Macedonian President Kiri Gligorov dated 1.10.1992, voicing his concern about the building of crosses on two Ottoman-built clock-towers in Bitola and Prilep in Macedonia.<sup>15</sup> Another interesting letter is one sent to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees dated 20.10.1992, where the IC is appealing to them to take into consideration the Muslim dietary needs – that pork and pork fat products should not be part of the humanitarian aid delivered by UNHCR.<sup>16</sup>

In the next issue of Glasnik, Muharem Omerdić is the author of two academic articles: about war crimes against the Muslims in B&H and about the killings of members and employees of the IC. The next part of the Glasnik newspaper is composed of witness statements given to a War Crimes Commission set up by Riyasat.<sup>17</sup> Finally, a translation of the concept of jihad in the publication *Faces of Islam* by British philosopher Ziauddin Sardar was published.<sup>18</sup> A set of press releases was also published: regarding the fate of Muslims in the south-eastern town of Gacko; a joint statement by Reis Selimovski and Bishop Vinko Puljić condemning crimes committed by the Bosnian Serb Army; report of the visit of Reis Selimovski to Kosovo and the condemnation of Yugoslav terror against Kosovar Albanians including members of the IC; speech of Reis Selimovski at the Inter-religious conference in Bern between 24<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> September.

### War-time Fatwas

In the first issues of the Glasnik newspaper in 1992, several questions were posted to the IC from the citizens requiring religious opinion on certain issues. Since this was a relatively new circumstance with no prior religious ruling, IC officials answered their questions in the “Question and Answer” section. Because of the war time, the newspaper was

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<sup>15</sup> Glasnik, 1992, 186.

<sup>16</sup> Glasnik, 1992, 187.

<sup>17</sup> Glasnik, 1992, 210-220. The statements were taken in Sarajevo and in Zagreb.

<sup>18</sup> Glasnik, 1992, 254.

published as double issues. The questions were answered by Muharem Omerdić and Ibrahim Džananović for issue 1–2, whereas for issue 3–4 it is not indicated who answered and in issue 5–6 it is indicated that only Omerdić answered.<sup>19</sup> In the first issue of the Glasnik newspaper it is visible that all of the questions are related to war-related issues concerning new moments in the lives of Bosniaks. The first such question was: For which deceased can be said that he is a shahid on Allah's path and does all that is written about martyrdom in the Qur'an and Sunnah apply to them?<sup>20</sup> The answer to this question was a theological one, where Omerdić gave two ways in which one can be considered a shahid: first, anyone who dies on Allah's path is a shahid and second, that martyrdom is attributed to a concrete person by name and surname. In the reply, Omerdić gives a detailed explanation of both these cases. Another question was posted by the Muslim NGO *Merhamet* which was one of the organizers of *janazah*<sup>21</sup> of Muslim victims of the siege in Sarajevo: "How should the body of a shahid be prepared and is there a difference between conducting this obligation if there are different categories of killed Muslims in combat who can be classified as shahids?" In this case, Omerdić gives a much more detailed explanation of how one shahid must be buried. He states that there are two types of shahids: a shahid of this world and the afterlife. "The Shahid of this and that world is the shahid of the first category." Furthermore, Omerdić describes what are the conditions that need to be fulfilled in order for someone to be a shahid. Interestingly, Omerdić also mentions another category *titularni šehid* (titular shahid) i.e. the shahids of this world. These are people who died in non-combat circumstances – killed outside of battle, killed as hostages or prisoners, in a fire, by sniper fire etc.

Another question was posted regarding the *qurban*, the sacrifice of a livestock animal during Eid al-Adha. The question stated that since there were war circumstances, whether a counter value could be given instead of a *qurban*. Omerdić replied that all those who are obliged to sacrifice a *qurban* must fulfil this obligation and that no counter value

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<sup>19</sup> Muhamed Čajlaković, *Hanefijski mezheb i njegov značaj za muslimane u Bosni i Hercegovini* (Sarajevo: Muhamed Čajlaković, 2016), 239.

<sup>20</sup> Glasnik, 1992, 165.

<sup>21</sup> Islamic term for burial.

can be given since one of the conditions for a qurban to be religiously acceptable is for the animal to be slaughtered.

The last question in this issue was posted regarding the question of raped women. The core of the question was whether an abortion was religiously acceptable in cases where women and girls became pregnant as a result of rape by enemy soldiers. Omerdić replied that according to Islamic law, abortion is allowed within 120 days after conception. Omerdić further stated that the child born in this case belongs to the mother and her family and that it should not “be considered of second-class importance, or unclean, neither it nor its mother since they are not guilty for what happened”.<sup>22</sup>

In the next issue, the first question was posted by a BH Army soldier asking “Is our fight on the level of fighting on God’s path and do Muslims who fight in the Bosnian Army against the Aggressor have the position of fighters on God’s path?” Omerdić replied: “Our fight against Chetniks and all other aggressor fighters who endanger our freedom and coexistence, is indeed a fight on God’s path...” adding on “Is there a more honourable fight and honourable fighters than those who fight against criminals who destroy our mosques, kill civilian population, persecute Muslims from their homes, rape Muslim women and slaughter the weak, hold Muslims in concentration camps and tortured prisoners?” He ends on a patriotic note: “In our Bosnia and Herzegovina, even though it is not only Muslim, we have to fight along those who fight for its integrity and freedom.”<sup>23</sup>

The next question was also posted by several B&H Army soldiers regarding the issue of deserting from the front line and what is the Islamic position on desertion. Omerdić replied that desertion is one of the most difficult and ruinous sins, citing excerpts from the Qur’an.<sup>24</sup> Another question, most probably also from a soldier, asked whether it is “permissible to cheat the enemy?” This was related to warfare tactics and so Omerdić replied that during war one has to be cunning and that

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<sup>22</sup> Glasnik, 1992, 169. Another important response to the issue of rape was written by Derviš Ahmed Nurudin, “Poruka silovanim ženama,” published in the *Islamska misao* in May 1993.

<sup>23</sup> Glasnik, 1992, 274.

<sup>24</sup> Glasnik, 1992, 275.



“We face an enemy which uses special methods and means of fighting,” thus, one has to be more careful.<sup>25</sup>

Another interesting question was posted regarding bribes. It said: “One member of our jamah (congregation) from Vogošća told us that he bribed his Serb neighbour who helped him save him and his family and escape to the free territory.” He asks if this kind of bribery is haram? Omerdić replied: “Giving bribery to save oneself from violence and save one's life from the hands of criminals and to save their dignity and their children is permissible.”<sup>26</sup>

The final question in this issue was related to the term jihad. Several questions were posted regarding this term. The readers asked what does the term jihad mean and to which extent it can be used in the context regarding the resistance to “the aggression on B&H and the fight against Chetniks.” Omerdić replies by giving the definition of jihad and by emphasizing it as an intellectual and moral fight. In the last paragraph of his reply he states: “With our fight we defend Islam and Muslims from destruction, as we defend this country and family from physical extermination,” adding that only malicious people can equalize this term in a negative connotation.<sup>27</sup>

### Re-organization of the IC

Since there was no end in sight regarding the war, being physically cut off from the rest of the IC and Muslim communities, the absence of the Reis-ul-ulema and other reasons led to the meeting of Bosniak members of the IC in Sarajevo including Bosniak intellectuals in besieged Sarajevo where an initiative to reorganize the IC was brought.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Glasnik, 1992, 276.

<sup>26</sup> Glasnik, 1992, 277.

<sup>27</sup> Glasnik, 1992, 278.

<sup>28</sup> See: Edin Radušić, “Stav Islamske zajednice prema raspadu Jugoslavije,” *Prilozi*, 36 (2007): 193-202. This idea had its oponents, some of which tried to divide the existing IC, see documentary “Glas imama” by Muhamed Halilović and Nedim Hrbat, Udruženje Ilmije, 2013.

In the first issue of the Glasnik newspaper in 1993, the Initiative for the re-organization of the IC was published:<sup>29</sup>

*In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful*

On Thursday, 1<sup>st</sup> April 1993, on the initiative of Interim authority of Mešihat of Islamic Community in Sarajevo, and on stimulus of recently formed working bodies (committees, office of Mešihat), and considering newly emerged opportunities in which Muslims live in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a community meeting of employees was held in all institutions and establishments of Islamic Community in Sarajevo in which are after an extensively discussions, the following conclusions and recommendations were adopted:

1. The International recognition of the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina has gained necessary conditions for establishing the Islamic Community in the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina with the head of Riyasat – Bosnia's Muslims as appropriate institution since 1882.
2. All existing institutions and establishments of Islamic Community with a deadline of three days, or until Monday, April 5<sup>th</sup>, 1993, will appoint two representatives for a working group that will manage all the affairs in a further procedure of reorganization of Islamic Community. Also, the Muslim institutions in Sarajevo, each separately, will appoint two representatives for previously mentioned working group, within the foreseen deadline. (A list of institutions and establishments of the Islamic Community as well as of the Muslim institutions is attached).
3. This working group has a mission to work on reorganization of the Islamic Community of the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina in accordance with the newly emerged needs and requirements by coordinating similar working groups established by the same principle in other regions (Zenica, Tuzla, Mostar, Bihac and Eastern Bosnia – Gorazde).
4. The above-mentioned working groups will formally establish a joint body by 25<sup>th</sup> April, 1993, the body that will manage the affairs of Islamic Community until the new elections in Islamic community and represent it in the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina and abroad.
5. Until the establishment of the aforementioned joint body which will represent the Islamic Community and make decisions in the transitio-

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<sup>29</sup> Glasnik, 1993, 45.

nal period, the existing organs and institutions of Islamic Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina will retain their legitimacy and legality in carrying out tasks within their jurisdiction.

6. After the establishment of independent Islamic Community in the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the conditions for possible binding of Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina with other Islamic communities from the area of former Yugoslavia, from the Balkans and beyond will be fulfilled.

This Initiative was brought on 1st April 1993 and signed by the Commission for Conclusions composed of Vejsil Godinjak, Zijad Ljevaković, Adnan Silajdžić and Mehmedalija Hadžić.

The Renewing Assembly (*Obnoviteljski sabor*) for the IC was held on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1993 in Sarajevo. The aim of this Assembly was to renew the autonomy of the IC according to the IC Statute from 1909 during the Austro-Hungarian Empire.<sup>30</sup> This assembly elected a new Executive Body and a new Reis-ul-ulema Mustafa Cerić, a former imam from Chicago and Professor in Malaysia. One of the first decisions he brought was a fatwa in May 1993 regarding a janazah prayer, in absence, for shahids of the war. Another significant fatwa was brought in December 1993 and it was related to the interpretation and practice of Islam:<sup>31</sup>

Bearing in mind the historical fact that Muslims in Bosnia, since the arrival of Islam in this area of sunni Hanafi madhhab (law school), never questioned their membership to this madhhab, knowing for the frequent occurrence of deviations from the Hanafi madhhab in certain religious practices, especially recently, upon coming into contact with Muslims from other madhhabs, whether in the country or abroad in exile.

1. Muftis, Imams, elders of tarikats and other religious officials in muftiates, committees, institutions and establishments of Islamic community in the country or abroad in exile are obliged to strictly adhere to the rules of Hanafi madhhab in performing religious rituals in mosques, masjids, tekke and all other Islamic gatherings.
2. Muftis, Imams, elders of tarikats and other religious officials are obliged to educate the people that is not allowed in the ibadah part to self-

<sup>30</sup> Fikret Karčić, "Disolucija SFRJ i njene posljedice za Islamsku zajednicu" in *Islamske teme i perspective* (Sarajevo: El-Kalem, 2009), 155.

<sup>31</sup> Glasnik, 1993, 198.

-initiatively mix the regulations of the recognized madhhab, in some cases that is proceeded according to one madhhab, and in other cases according to regulations of other Hanafi madhhab.

3. When composing textbooks from the field of ibadah, we should take in consideration not to harm the principles of Hanafi madhhab.

This fatwa was a significant one since the war in B&H saw an increase in different interpretations of Islam being propagated by certain foreign humanitarian organizations.<sup>32</sup> This was the first official reaction to the rise of foreign influences and interferences in the interpretation of Islam in B&H. Another new moment with the presence of foreign aid workers and foreign fighters were shariah marriages. There was an increase in marriages concluded either by local or foreign religious leaders, in most cases imams. The IC could not stop the entire practice in the country and in order to decrease it, they issued instructions in October 1994, prohibiting shariah marriages without previously conducting a wedding at the municipality:<sup>33</sup>

#### It is Prohibited

to conclude the shariah marriages between Bosniak women and foreign citizens until the same marriage is previously registered with responsible state authorities and until the interested parties bring valid documentation as a proof of that registration.

Muftiates are obliged to bring this prohibition for the knowledge of all imams in their area as they are obliged to strictly adhere to it. The most severe disciplinary measures will be applied against the official of the Islamic community who violates this decision of the Riyasat of the Islamic Community.

In the issues of Glasnik in 1994, the official part is mainly overloaded with numerous documents, decisions and minutes from meetings. There is interesting information which deserves to be mentioned. On the constitutive inaugural meeting of the Riyasat of the IC on 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> January 1994, the Mufti from Bihać Hasan ef. Makić informed the attendees that he had appealed to the people in the Bihać region to

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<sup>32</sup> For more on the foreign influences: Harun Karčić, "Globalisation and Islam in Bosnia: Foreign Influences and their Effects," *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, 11: 2 (2010): 151-166.

<sup>33</sup> Glasnik, 1994, 295.

stop the fratricidal war i.e. the war between the Bosnian Army and rebels led by a pro-Serb Fikret Adbić.<sup>34</sup> He also said that some people had asked whether a janazah should be a prayer for soldiers of Fikret Adbić and that he said that it should not.

### Conclusion

After the war ended in December 1995, B&H and the IC were faced with new problems and struggles. Destroyed communities, jamaats, mosques, mass atrocities including genocide committed in more than half of the country, the problem of returning to pre-war homes and rebuilding new returnee communities and such. At this time, the IC spearheaded the rebuilding processes, the return of internally displaced persons' and the commemoration of mass atrocities throughout the country. These processes went on for several years although it can be said that in some areas, the rebuilding of communities and infrastructure is still taking place to this day.<sup>35</sup>

The position, ideas, debates and experience of the IC on the eve of the dissolution of Yugoslavia and especially during the war and genocide taking place between 1992 and 1995 are still a subject of academic research. Based on this work, it can be concluded that the Glasnik newspaper played a huge role during the war as the official herald of the IC. Both in its academic and official parts it can be noticed that the war came as a shock to the IC and to the Muslim population. The most interesting parts are the questions asked by the Glasnik's readers who asked for religious opinions regarding new war conditions. The answers were important since they were provided by the official authorities of the IC. This contribution covers a small segment in the century-old work of one of the most interesting Muslim communities in the world.

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<sup>34</sup> Fikret Adbić is a former businessman from Velika Kladuša – a town in North-western Bosnia – who established his own tiny para-state which was against the Bosnian government and which sided with the Serbian authorities who provided them with arms and training.

<sup>35</sup> For example, mosques in Banja Luka and Foča are still in the process of being rebuilt.

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