



A DECLARATION OF THE  
WORLD BOSNIAK CONGRESS  
ON COMMON SECURITY  
AND GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

**Dr Mustafa Cerić**

*Grand Mufti Emeritus of Bosnia-Herzegovina and President of World Bosniak Congress*

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# INTRODUCTION

**I**N THE AFTERMATH of the New York attacks in September 2001, the massacre in Madrid in March 2004, and the London bombing in July 2005, Dr Mustafa Cerić - as Raisu-l-'Ulama and Grand Mufti of Bosnia-Herzegovina - issued the *Declaration of European Muslims* on July 2005 at the East London Mosque, London.

The Declaration has been endorsed and disseminated by the Islamic Forum of Europe and is largely supported across Europe. In an interview with RFE/RL on March 14, 2006 Dr Cerić described the declaration: "It is a personal -- it is probably too much to say, "confession" -- but a personal appeal to the European audience not to make a mistake in generalising all Muslims and not to spread Islamophobia, that was, I think, going on in Europe and in the West generally, especially after September 11 [2001]." Dr Cerić added, "The second message was to the Muslims who live in Europe to take seriously these three events that may have great consequences for their stay in Europe and their status in Europe. The third message was to the Muslim world at large to ask them to help us in the West, and especially in Europe, to develop a kind of dialogue that is acceptable to us as Muslims, as well as to our European neighbors."

Eight years after the *Declaration of European Muslims*, now as the president the World Bosniak Congress and Grand Mufti Emeritus of Bosnia, Dr Cerić has led the effort to issue the *Second Declaration on Common Security and Global Citizenship*. The Congress was inaugurated in Sarajevo on December 29, 2012 as a global national voice of the Bosniak nation in the aftermath of the last genocide in Bosnia.

This *Second Declaration* comes as a response to recent events in Boston and London with an emphasis on the unacceptable use and abuse of the name of Allah and Islam, especially in the case of the London killing. At this time Dr Cerić, as president of the World Bosniak Congress, is calling on the Bosniak nation to take a bold stance about their faith and culture and be a good example to others: to condemn violence and promote peace and tolerance wherever they are.

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**T**HE WORLD BOSNIAK CONGRESS has issued this *Declaration on Common Security and Global Citizenship*, expressing the sense of the Bosniak nation regarding the 15 April 2013 deadly Boston Marathon bombing and the 22 May 2013 horrific act of violence on the streets of London, where the holy phrase "Allahu Akbar" has been used and the holy name of Islam has been abused.

- 0.1** Whereas in the Boston Marathon bombing, three people killed and more than a hundred wounded by a terrorist attack, and in Woolwich (London) an off-duty British soldier was killed, and whereas these acts of violence have been attributed to Muslims with the perception that they are inspired by Islamic teachings to massacre innocent people in such a horrendous manner;
- 0.2** Whereas following the Boston Marathon bombing and the horrific act of violence on the streets of London, with the blood on the hands of a killer with a meat cleaver, Muslims live under the heavy pressure of a collective guilt for "Islamic terrorism," which is constantly portrayed as if it is Islamic in nature;
- 0.3** Whereas we believe that it is time that Muslim scholars and intellectuals of all schools and denominations should come together and issue a strong statement for the Common Security and Global Citizenship against those who are using the name of Allah and Islam in a wrong way;
- 0.4** Whereas the Bosniak nation had been almost annihilated and suffered the worst of all crimes against humanity: genocide whereby they were exposed to indiscriminate shelling, their women raped and tortured; and where they experienced the humiliation of concentration camps, the Bosniaks feel that it is both their human right and their moral duty to speak out loudly and clearly against the abuse of the holy name of Allah and the peaceful name of Islam for a brutal, profane purpose which is endangering the future of their children;
- 0.5** Whereas the great majority of Muslims around the world are peaceful men and women who love to live in harmony and cooperation with their neighbors, to provide a decent life for their families, and to contribute to the wellbeing of their communities;
- 0.6** Whereas human life is God's gift and thus each and every human being is entitled to the right of life, faith, freedom, property and dignity.

Now therefore, be it declared to the World of Humanity, it is the sense of the World Bosniak Congress that:

- 1** The Common Security and Global Citizenship are two essential values of human freedom and equality.
- 2** The faith of Islam, al-*imān*, designates to the idea of al-*‘amn*: security, safety, continuity, reliability, and trust. Hence, the meaning of al-*imān*, faith, is not only a faith of a faithful, but also a security of the other. Hence, the one who is al-*mu‘min* (faithful), and that is the state of al-*imān* (inner security) and al-*amān* (public trust), is a genuine Muslim who loves peace, who works for peace, and who brings about solidarity and cooperation in the society. For, neither the meek nor the aggressive will inherit the earth, but the cooperative, which means the peaceful man who works for the security of all, i.e. Common Security.
- 3** In the same way as we have it for the word al-*imān*, we have three root letters for al-*islām* to guide us to the real meaning of Islam and Muslim. Thus, the letter *sīn*, *mīm* and *lām* are the three Arabic letters to designate the concept of peace in Islam as the core drive of an entire Weltanschauung of a Muslim. While Islam means submission to the will of Allah Almighty, it also includes: peaceful submission, peaceful acceptance and peaceful practice of Islam in the name of Allah Almighty. It is the very idea of Islam that bears the witness of an historic affirmative action that "there shall be no compulsion in religion".

This Qur’anic declaration of the seventh century is unique not only in its historic initiative, but also in its farsighted divine vision for humanity that has learnt by now that forceful submission not only to a religion, but also to any ideology has not been working and will never work. Therefore, Islam has brought about a principle that a forceful submission to God is not acceptable by God Himself. This is because only peaceful acceptance of submission is valid submission to God because God Himself is the Peace, al-*Salām*, and thus He accepts only peaceful worship and peaceful relations among human beings. Indeed, the peaceful submission to God assumes a peace of mind that comes as a result of an inner security of faith, i.e., the trust in God and in man. If Islam means the peaceful submission to Allah Almighty, then the word Muslim literally means "a peaceful man", the man who spreads peace in the world. This is best expressed by the Prophet Muhammad in his definition of a Muslim: - The Muslim, i.e. the peaceful man, is the one who makes other Muslims, i.e. other peaceful men, to be safe from his

hands and his words!

- 4** The third fundamental pillar of an Islamic edifice of peace and security is the idea of al-ihsān, which designates to beauty-beautiful, to well-being, to good-goodness, to right-righteousness. Thus, we read that the faithful Muslim, male and female, should always maintain his/her human character beautiful in the eyes of others, he/she should be always well-doing for others, he/she should always be good to others and he/she should always be righteous to fellow human beings to gain the title of Muhsin, the one who is doing well, good, and right to others, not only to get their appraisal, but also to be seen by God, who sees what he/she is doing although he/she does not see God. This is the highest degree of beauty of the human soul, this is the highest moral value of the human being – and indeed, this is the highest ideal of a concept of the Common Security and Global Citizenship.
- 5** It is not the first time in history that a religion is misinterpreted by the prejudices of those who are stuck by their hatred toward the Other; it is not the first time in history either that a concept of a faith has been misguided by their own followers towards the opposite direction; and it is not first time in history that the victims of prejudices must realise that a misconception about them will not go away by itself. They must stand up and speak out about their real concept of life, faith, culture, peace and security as part and parcel of humanity. But not only speak, they must act in a convincing manner so that what they say they believe, preach, and teach, is in practice in their own life. A personal example is more powerful than a thousand words of empty preaching.

Indeed, we Muslims must admit that there are irresponsible men among us who are doing disservice by their incorrect service to Islam. No one understands or accepts what some violent individuals and groups are doing claiming to be in the noble name of Islam. They are spreading misconceptions about Islam and Muslims in such a way that generations to come will have a hard time clearing it up. An injustice does not justify another injustice. The Muslims are advised by Allah Almighty that they should promote peace and do justice even to their enemies in order to change their hearts and make them their friends: - Good and Evil are not the same. Therefore, you should always promote Good and thus if there is an enmity between you and him, he might as a result of your goodness become your sincere friend. Having said that it is equally important to address the root cause and factors that lead to extremism and violence in the Muslim community. Domestic issues,

foreign policy, racism and Islamophobia, amongst other issues, need to be looked at robustly and comprehensively. To ignore this or to deny any links is irresponsible and will only serve to perpetuate the problems we are facing today.

- 6** Muslim preachers around the world need to preach the peace and tolerance of Islam and stop condemning each other in the name of Islam. Muslim preachers, especially those who speak from the pulpits of mosques and global broadcasting media outlets, bear great responsibility for the Common Security among the worlds' nations. Muslim preachers must have a feeling and responsibility for the peace and security of the Muslims everywhere. A curse upon a brother of the same faith with different theological opinions is not bravery, but a sign of cowardice. The real bravery of a Muslim preacher is his guidance to his brother to live in peace, security, freedom, and dignity with the rest of peaceful humanity.
- 7** The World Bosniak Congress calls upon all Muslims around the world to:
  - (i) Stand up for citizens of the countries that gave them shelter and protection when they needed them the most, and to protect the safety and security of their fellow citizens by rejecting and actively preventing, whenever possible, any and all acts of terror;
  - (ii) Raise their children and help educate future generations of Muslims of different nations to be the integral part of societies they live in and call home, and to know that the ends do not justify violent means and that acts of killing and/or injuring innocent civilians are in a complete contradiction to the basics principles of Islam, as well as basic humanity;
  - (iii) Show their neighbors and communities how Islam can be the force behind improving the social and economic conditions of our communities, by following the principles of Islam that command us to feed the needy, protect our neighbors, and live in peace and harmony with the rest of humanity;
  - (iv) Speak out against hatred and join us in defending the basic principles of humanity, and to share with their neighbors and colleagues that Islam belongs to neither East nor West, but to the hearts of those who want to live in peace and security with others.

- 8** Committed to the Common Security and Global Citizenship, the World Bosniak Congress calls upon the Bosniak people wherever they are to:
- (i) Promote the founding charter of the World Bosniak Congress in which it has been declared that God's gifts of life, religion, nation, freedom, property and honor are inalienable rights of every man and every people;
  - (ii) Preserve the Islamic Community of Bosnia-Herzegovina as the sole and united community of Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina, of Bosniaks outside of their homeland, and of other Muslims who accept it as their own, striving to preserve the Islamic tradition of Bosniaks in line with the requirements of the time and place by establishing and maintaining contacts and cooperation with communities, institutions and organizations in activities which promote peace, justice and good-will among all people, with the ultimate goal of prompting good and preventing evil; and to live by the Qur'anic injunction to Hold fast all together by the rope which God (stretches out for you) and be not divided among yourselves;
  - (iii) Commit to the founding principle of the World Bosniak Congress that calls for deep awareness and historical responsibility of today's generation of Bosniaks, who have survived genocide, to do everything in their power to prevent their decedents from becoming victims of a new genocide. Due to their difficult and testing history, Bosniaks have a unique responsibility to be the standard bearers of morality and pluralism in all the lands that they inhabit and call home;
  - (iv) Uphold the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which proclaims that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, religion or other status, especially Article 3, which states that everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person;
  - (v) Uphold Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which state that everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion;
  - (vi) Never forget the preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human

Rights, which states that disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind;

- (vii) And to promote globally the *Declaration of European Muslims* that has declared Bosniak conviction and profound belief that Islam teaches Muslims that Jews and Christians are People of the Book and so Jews, Christians, and Muslims should learn to share their common spiritual roots and their common future hopes without prejudice in order to avoid discrimination, low self-esteem, demoralisation, religious and racial hatred, helplessness, lack of control, social avoidance, lack of opportunities, and political under-representation.

All considered, have it be *Resolved* that with a great sense of pride and trust in the compassionate character of the Bosniak tradition of Islam, the World Bosniak Congress will encourage Bosniaks worldwide to:

- (i) Vigorously pursue these aims through constant education of their youth and their communities of decent moral values while openly and loudly rejecting violence of any kind and all acts of terror as fundamentally un-Islamic, immoral and inhumane;
- (ii) Strongly demonstrate perpetual and proactive responsibility and duty to systematically engage their communities on all levels of personal and institutional collaboration to solidify the trust and confidence of their fellow citizens in every aspect of human endeavor;
- (iii) Do every day whatever they can as integral and trusted members of their communities as well as citizens of many countries in the world in order to help each other pave the way towards common security and lasting peace with justice for all. Join us in this battle to defend and promote the positive, constructive and everlasting Islamic values of peace and justice while rejecting terrorism as it is always wrong regardless of its origin and aim.
- (iv) And ensure that the Bosniaks will always remember that real happiness is not simply to be loved but to love the other because the more you give to the other the more you have for yourself.



## **Dr Mustafa Cerić**

*Grand Mufti Emeritus of Bosnia-Herzegovina and President of World Bosniak Congress*

Dr Mustafa Cerić has been the Raisu-l-'Ulama (President of the Scholars) of Islamic Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Grand Mufti of Bosnia since 1993. Born in Visoko, Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1952, he graduated from Madrasah in Sarajevo as well as the Faculty of Arabic Language and Literature at Al-Azhar University in Egypt. In 1987 he earned a doctorate in Islamic Studies from the University of Chicago, where he studied under the late Dr. Fazlur Rahman. Dr Cerić recently founded the Grand Mufti Cerić Foundation based in Sarajevo.

Dr Cerić served as an Imam at the Islamic Cultural Center, Chicago and Islamic Center of Zagreb, Croatia. He was a professor in Bosnia (Faculty of Islamic Sciences), Malaysia (International Institute for Islamic Thought and Civilisation, Kualalumpur) and the United States (American Islamic College, Chicago).

Dr Cerić is the co-recipient of the 2003 UNESCO Felix Houphoet Boigny Peace Prize for Contribution to World Peace and recipient of the International Council of Christians and Jews Annual Sir Sternberg Award for exceptional contribution to interfaith understanding. In Germany Dr Cerić was awarded the Theodor-Heuss-Award 2007 and the Eugen-Biser-Award 2008.

He is a member of several local and international scientific organisations and societies, including the Interreligious Council of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Foundation of Srebrenica-Potocari Memorial and Cemetery, the European Council for Fatwas and Research, World Conference of Religions for Peace, the Executive Committee of the European Council of Religious Leaders, the Fiqh Academy in Mecca, Aal Albayt Foundation for Islamic Thought in Jordan, International Commission for Peace Research chaired by Dr. Henry Kissinger.

Dr Cerić has authored "Roots of Synthetic Theology in Islam"; "A Choice Between War and Peace", and "European Muslim Declarations" (published in Arches), among other numerous publications in Bosnian such as "Religion, Nation and Homeland". Currently, he is a Visiting Professor at the World Islamic Science & Education University (WISE) in Jordan.



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