

*On March 18, 2026, a joint statement condemning hate speech, Islamophobia, and false narratives about Bosniaks and Bosnia and Herzegovina was initiated by Islamic Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bosniak Cultural Community, Merhamet, and Council of the Congress of Bosniak Intellectuals.*

*The statement was signed in Sarajevo by a broad spectrum of political, religious, academic, and cultural representatives. Among the signatories were the current Bosniak member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina Denis Bećirović, as well as former Presidency members Bakir Izetbegović and Šefik Džaferović.*

*Signatories also included representatives of legislative and executive authorities at the state and Federation levels, political party officials, and prominent figures from academic, cultural, charitable, and religious institutions. Among them were Foreign Minister Elmedin Konaković, House of Peoples official Kemal Ademović, Minister of Defense Zukan Helez, Minister of Interior of the Federation Ramo Isak, Bosnia and Herzegovina's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Zlatko Lagumdžija, and Director of the Srebrenica Memorial Center Emir Suljagić.*

*Other notable signatories included Sanjin Kodrić, Kasim Trnka, Amina Rizvanbegović Džuvić, former Grand Mufti Mustafa Cerić, RS Vice President Ćamil Duraković, FBiH Vice President Refik Lendo, and Minister for Human Rights and Refugees Sevlid Hurtić, among others.*

*The initiative brought together leading Bosniak institutions and officials in a unified effort to counter hate speech, disinformation, and divisive narratives, while reaffirming the importance of social cohesion and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina.*

## **STATEMENT**

Condemning Hate Speech, Islamophobia, and False Narratives about Bosniaks and Bosnia and Herzegovina

- 1) We, Bosniaks and Muslims, citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina, representatives of academic, political, cultural, social, and religious life, categorically reject false constructions about the "endangerment of Christians by Muslims" and "widespread antisemitism" in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which are being promoted as justification for anti-state secessionist policies and the preparation of a new genocide against Bosniaks. This is a malicious campaign of demonization of Bosniaks because they also culturally belong to the Islamic civilizational sphere.

Similar constructions from the 1980s preceded the Aggression against Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Genocide, ethnic cleansing, and war

crimes committed against Bosniaks. We strongly condemn such narratives and will oppose, by all lawful means, the unacceptable hate speech directed against the Bosniak people and Bosnian Muslims.

We are particularly concerned about the silent approval of such statements in both the domestic and international public sphere, especially within circles in whose name these accusations are made. We call upon the judicial institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina to sanction every such form of hate speech.

- 2) We are determined to oppose chauvinistic threats to peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina and to condemn every manifestation of hate speech against Bosniaks, Serbs, Croats, Jews, Roma, or members of any other community in our country.
- 3) We consider it our duty today, just as Bosniak leaders did during the Second World War through the Muslim resolutions condemning Nazi crimes on racial and national grounds, and as was done in 2015 with the Joint Statement on violent extremism, and in the spirit of ZAVNOBiH and the anti-fascist heritage of the Bosniak people, to present our stance on the new wave of intolerance threatening the world, and especially the Bosniak people and Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- 4) As representatives of Bosniaks, we are determined to persist within our state, academic, political, cultural, humanitarian, and religious institutions in advocating openness, tolerance, and understanding, building Bosnia and Herzegovina as a bridge between East and West. Our country is not and cannot be a field for a "clash of civilizations." Its history testifies to the meeting of traditions, cultures, and religions. For Bosniaks, Bosnia and Herzegovina is a pluralistic and secular society in which different religious and ethnic identities constitute a legitimate part of its historical and social being.
- 5) The systematic promotion of historical falsehoods, the campaign of reversing the roles of victim and aggressor during the Aggression, and open Islamophobia against Bosniaks aim to undermine the foundations of the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina and represent a continuation of overt secessionist policies.
- 6) Bosniaks, as a European people, have the right to full political subjectivity like all other peoples. Claims that they cannot be a free political people, with all their particularities, are a continuation of the genocidal project.
- 7) We remind that genocide was committed against Bosniaks, as proven before international and domestic courts. During the Aggression and Genocide in the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Islamic cultural

heritage was systematically destroyed, including 614 mosques, while in the territory under the control of the legal authorities and the Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, whose composition was mostly Bosniak, key objects and elements of the religious and cultural identity of other communities were preserved.

Despite these facts, Bosniaks accepted the Dayton Peace Agreement with the belief that, together with other peoples and citizens and with the support of the international community, they would build a common state.

- 8) As holders of responsible positions in state and civil institutions, we will firmly oppose narratives that attempt to portray efforts to realize certain expansionist state policies at the expense of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a religious conflict. We reject the polarization of Bosnian society and the creation of discourse about a "clash of civilizations."
- 9) We believe that Islam had a constructive role in the historical formation of the Bosniak people, and thus of Bosnia and Herzegovina, just as Christianity had in the formation of other European peoples, including those who live with us in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in neighboring countries. We do not consider Islamic identity to be an obstacle to the democratic and secular organization of the state.
- 10) Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Bosniaks territorially, politically, and civilizationally belong to Europe and its cultural and historical tradition. Therefore, we strongly support the strategic foreign-policy goals of our state that lead us toward full membership in the European Union and NATO.
- 11) We welcome the determination of the Islamic Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina to continue, on the principles of the 2024 Platform for Dialogue, to be a leader in interreligious dialogue and understanding, both in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in other countries where it operates.  
  
We also welcome the constructive role of the Interreligious Council in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which consistently defends the teachings of the traditional religious communities and churches of Bosnia and Herzegovina through its public statements and jointly condemns hate speech in the public sphere.
- 12) We will not allow the endangerment of freedom and the undermining of peace—the greatest values we have enjoyed with our fellow citizens over the past three decades as a legacy of the Dayton Peace Agreement. In this regard, we are committed to continuing to protect the peace and freedom of all citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and we expect the

signatories and witnesses of the Dayton Peace Agreement to share these values with us.