



To: Honorable Mayor Zohran K. Mamdani

From: Bosnian Herzegovinian Islamic Center New York (BHICNY);

Subject: Disturbing and Provocative Mobile Truck Messaging Throughout NYC, during July 11th Commemorative Anniversary of Srebrenica genocide

Dear Mayor Mamdani,

We are reaching out to You to express our serious concern regarding recent developments involving New Yorkers of Bosnian heritage.

New York residents of various creeds and backgrounds have reported seeing billboard vans in the City with displays of language, signs, and messaging they experience as anti-Bosnian, hostile, intimidating, and most of all, inaccurate and misleading. We learned that the authorities of the Bosnia's lesser entity, RS, commissioned a mobile truck display campaign aimed at relativizing and minimizing the horrors of genocide in Srebrenica. That campaign was launched in our beautiful City on July 11 - the very day the UN General Assembly designated as the International Day of Reflection and Commemoration of the 1995 Genocide in Srebrenica.

The timing and locations (in front of United Nations, in Times Square, in residential neighborhoods in Brooklyn and Queens) of this rather morbid disinformation campaign were carefully orchestrated. Genocide survivors and many other Bosnians who fled persecution and ethnic cleansing understood the implied message conveyed by these black mobile billboard trucks roaming New York City quite well – they were there to remind them of the notorious vans roaming through Bosnian towns in 1990s from which the black-clad masked men would emerge and forcibly abduct civilians - never to be seen again. Many Bosnian New Yorkers who lost their loved ones in such campaigns had to relive the horrors of war, again, this past weekend.

Given the painful memory of Srebrenica Genocide, we firmly hold that no resident should have to wonder whether they can safely and peacefully enjoy a public park, walk through their neighborhood, or prepare for their religious observance without being confronted by rhetoric that demeans, targets, or intimidates them because they are Bosnian, immigrant, survivor of genocide, or because they simply bear a name that designates them as a target.

We fully recognize and respect the constitutional right to free expression. We are not asking the City to regulate political viewpoints or silence lawful speech. We are asking the City and the State to apply their own laws and ordinances fairly, consistently, and without exception, and to respond decisively when conduct crosses the line into denial of judicial and forensic facts, into the realm of threats, intimidation, harassment, obstruction, or behavior that interferes with the safe use and enjoyment of public space by others.

Accordingly, we respectfully request that the City:

1. Confirm whether the organizers of the mobile campaign have obtained valid permits and whether those permits comply with NYC laws that prohibit enticing hate and intolerance.
2. Ensure that any permit conditions, including the time, signage, and public safety requirements, are being followed.
3. Enforce the City Code consistently when the presence of these mobile displays occur without the required permit, exceed permitted conditions, interfere with the safe public's use of the space, use abusive and derogatory language, obstruct access, or create an unsafe environment.
4. Establish a clear protocol for visible City and police presence at places of worship when warranted, as well as a clear point of contact for Bosnian American or any other NYC residents of any other faith beside Muslims who experience intimidation, harassment, or interference when faced with these misleading mobile displays.
5. Communicate publicly that Bosnian American residents, like all residents of NYC, are entitled to safety, dignity, and equal access to public spaces, and that discrimination, intimidation, and unlawful conduct will not be tolerated.

This is not solely a Bosnian American or a Muslim issue. When any New York City resident feels isolated, unwelcome, or unsafe in their own neighborhood, the responsibility to respond and reassert that sense of safety belongs to all of us; especially to those entrusted with enforcing the law and protecting the public.



We also have to note that our request for permit to hold a commemorative event at Bowling Green dedicated to Srebrenica has not been approved this year, (after having it held on this day and location for more than a decade), due to the «World Cup events» taking place in the City. This saddens us, because, in the past, NYC officials representing the Mayor's Office would attend our commemorations and address the public in attendance, underscoring the importance of honoring the victims of genocide and cultivating the culture of remembrance. This year, we have heard nothing from Your office; instead, we were exposed to a moving campaign of intimidation and genocide relativization. We know there is no ill will in this year's (in)action, but the juxtaposition of these two things creates a really bad optics for Your office and a bitter taste for the Bosnian community in NYC.

We hope we can work together to rectify this. We kindly ask the City to act with urgency, clarity, and compassion. Freedom of speech does not require the City to ignore violations of justice and law, nor does it require Bosnian American residents to silently endure conduct that intimidates them and undermines their safety, dignity, and sense of belonging.

We respectfully request a written reply outlining the City's response and would welcome the opportunity to meet with the City's leadership to discuss this matter further, should the need arise.

Your attention to this issue is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

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LINKS: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2026/07/1167892>
<https://www.icty.org/en/outreach/documentaries/srebrenica-genocide-no-room-for-denial>
<https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1CxNbfU9T3/>
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