

Lessons from the Tragedies of the Bosnian War

This July marks the 25th year since the genocide of Bosnian Muslims in Srebrenica was criminally carried out by the Bosnian Serb Army, led by the 'Butcher of Bosnia', war criminal Ratko Mladic. It was 25 years ago this July that the world stood by and watched Bosnian men, women and children being butchered, raped, tortured and expelled from their homes, villages and cities in Eastern Bosnia in what was termed an 'ethnic cleansing' campaign led by the Bosnian Serb war criminal Radovan Karadzic. International powers like America, Britain and France together with international organizations like the UN passively and complicity watched or turned a feigned blind eye as the Bosnian Serb Army carried out the largest mass murder of civilians in Europe since World War II. With the pursuit of ending the Bosnian war that continued from 1992 to 1995 following the breakup of the Communist state of Yugoslavia, America wanted peace at any price in the Balkans and this was to include the unforgivable price of the known Bosnian Serb revenge plot to systematically massacre thousands of Bosnian Muslim boys and men who were either sheltering in the abandoned UN Dutch controlled 'Safe Areas' in Potocari and Srebrenica or were captured or killed trying to flee to the mountains and onwards to the Bosnian town of Tuzla.

The catalogue of Serbian war crimes led by Ratko Mladic and committed by the Bosnian Serb Army upon Bosnian Muslims during the war included the total blockade and 1452-day siege of the city of Sarajevo – the longest siege of a city in modern warfare after the siege of Ghouta, Syria – with constant bombardment of the city with shelling and constant sniper bullets that together over the 4 years killed 14,000 Sarajevans, the systematic wartime genocidal rape of over 50,000 women and girls in their homes, hotels, camps and in open public by Serb paramilitary units with these painful injustices and trauma carried to their innocent children and the torture, starvation and killing of Muslims in concentration camps like Omarska were all evident enough that world leaders knew of the ultranationalist Serbian evil headed by Mladic and Karadzic and that the genocide of Srebrenica would set such evil into historical stone.

Regardless of the artificial gestures from world leaders at the time like former U.S Assistant Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke who admitted that the Bosnian war was, "the greatest failure of the West since the 1930's." Muslims were not ignorant to the complicit hatred that Western Powers in Europe held towards the Muslims of Bosnia during the war. The words of EU mediator Lord Owen certainly revealed this when he said to besieged Muslims and non-Muslims in Sarajevo, "Don't, don't, don't live under this dream that the west is going to come and sort this problem out." Or when France's former foreign minister, Alain Juppe said in an interview in reference to the genocide of Srebrenica, "We all knew the men would be annihilated, or at least that the Serb's were not sparing the lives of prisoners."

There wasn't any wonder as to the unrestricted unleashing of the Bosnian Serb Army's evil ultranationalist bloodthirsty lust for revenge upon unarmed Muslim boys and men in eastern Bosnia! Ratko Mladic was filmed confidently staring into a Serb camera after capturing Srebrenica saying, "We give this town to the Serb nation as a gift. The time has come to take revenge on the Muslims."

Then it was to follow, that 8,000 unarmed, tied and blindfolded boys and men aged between 12-77 years of age after being "interrogated for suspected war crimes" and torn apart and separated from their mothers, wives and daughters who in the tens of thousands were expelled away into Bosnian territory, would over a 4-day period to be systematically slaughtered and buried in pre-dug mass graves that satellite imagery captured at the time of these genocidal acts.

There are many lessons that Muslims can take from this year's 25th Remembrance of the Genocide of Muslims in Srebrenica. Firstly, the systematic massacring and genocidal evil unleashed upon Muslims since 1995 in Bosnia was not isolated but has continued to this day

upon Muslims in Syria, Myanmar, East Turkestan, Afghanistan, Somalia, Southern Thailand and Philippines, Iraq, Libya, Central African Republic, Palestine and Yemen. The American led militant Capitalist civilization after the Cold War continues until today to maintain its global war on Islam, securing its global interests through wars and occupations in the Muslim world, through proxy wars by puppet Muslim rulers like Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in Yemen and from nationalist allied governments and international and regional organizations across the world who have implemented counter-terror and extremist policies that target Muslim citizens.

Secondly, the rise of right-wing ultranationalist parties and movements akin to the ultranationalist Serbian parties and movements target and scapegoat Muslims for any failures in society, uniting and mobilizing disaffected men and women like the mass murderer Australian Brendon Tarrant who massacred 51 Muslims during Friday prayer in Christchurch's Al-Noor Mosque in New Zealand in 2019. To the extent that Tarrant played in the car he drove on the way to Al-Noor Mosque the Serb nationalist song "Remove Kebab" that celebrates Radovan Karadzic sung by Serbian forces during the Bosnian war.

Thirdly, the Muslim Ummah can also strongly recognize how evil American "interests" are knowing that America instigated the crisis in the Balkans by supporting Milosevic and maintained it by imposing the weapons embargo on Bosnia, so as to have created a demand for the US in the European region by showing Europe that they couldn't do without American "leadership."

Fourthly, Bosnia was also a clear reminder that even after years of assimilation, the fair skinned blue-eyed Bosnians were still not accepted by Europe, because they were Muslims. This is a lesson Muslims living in the West need to learn from, no matter how many of our values and traditions we abandon in the attempt to so-called modernize and become part of wider society, there will always remain a suspicion. The Muslim community needs to tackle any hysteria created by government policies and ongoing attempts to manipulate Islam, by adhering steadfastly to our values and more importantly by engaging with wider society and ordinary members of the public.

Fifthly, international organizations like the United Nations are certainly no friends of Muslims. The abandonment of Bosnian Muslims in their so-called 'Safe Havens' who previously deceived the Muslims into thinking that UNPROFOR would protect them became all too clear to the Ummah. The UN even helped supply the Serb forces with over 30,000 litres of petrol to transport Muslim boys and men to their mass graves!

Therefore, Oh Muslims, we must learn from our Islamic History from the example of the likes of the Khilafah al-Mu'tasim bi'llah when he heard reports of a Muslim woman being attacked by the Romans in the Roman city Ammuriyah. The Khilafah said, "A report has reached me that one Muslim sister was attacked in a Roman city. Wallahi, I will send an army that is so big that when it reaches them it is still leaving our base. And tell me the strongest city of these Romans and I will send the army to that city." Therefore, security can only be achieved under the Khilafah. «إِنَّمَا الْإِمَامُ جُنَّةٌ يُقَاتِلُ مِنْ وَرَائِهِ وَيُتَّقَى بِهِ» **"Behold, the Iman is but a shield from behind which people fight and by which they protect themselves."** [Muslim]

The Muslim Ummah requires sincere and aware leadership with the determination to face up to any threats posed to this Ummah, a shield as described in many hadith to protect the live and honor of this Ummah. So that when the likes of the former Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic mockingly questioned the Muslims in Bosnia as he slaughtered them, "where is your Allah now?" He would receive the decisive response he deserves.

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