



## SREBRENICA SPEECH | 2013

### GRAND MUFTI OF BOSNIA'S SREBRENICA SPEECH

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On the Occasion of 11<sup>th</sup> of July 2013 Funeral in Potocari, marking the 18<sup>th</sup>  
Anniversary of the Srebrenica Genocide.

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In the name of God, the most beneficent, the most merciful.

All praise is due to Allah, the Almighty.

We seek Allah's help and seek His guidance.

We ask Allah to protect us from our bad deeds and from the evil whisper of  
the Shaytan.

We praise Allah, seek His help and ask for His forgiveness. Whoever Allah  
guides none can misguide, and whoever He allows to fall astray, none can  
guide them aright. We bear witness that there is no one worthy of worship  
but Allah Alone, and we bear witness that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is  
His slave-servant and the seal of His Messengers.

We shall all stand before Allah on Judgement Day, to answer for our deeds  
and actions. The Prophet of Islam, Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:  
"Allah ordered you the truth: He loves honesty and gives to those who do  
good deeds". We are constantly faced with temptations but with *Imaan*  
(belief) and *Sabr* (patience) at times of test and trials, Allah will remove our  
worries, grief and difficulties. With true and sincere Sabr, we will be able to  
achieve salvation in the Hereafter.

Dear fathers and mothers of the *shuhada* (martyrs), my dear brothers and

sisters in faith, your Excellencies and esteemed guests.

In this very place, where the peaceful repose our loved ones, in this day of peace and dignity, I send you greetings of peace: *As-Salamu 'Alaykum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuhu*.

It is indeed a blessing and a very poignant moment for all of us gathered here today, and especially those of us who survived the genocide in our beloved Bosnia-Herzegovina. Out of Allah's mercy we are gathered here today in Potocari on 11<sup>th</sup> of July 2013, the third of Ramadan 1434 AH.

We have come together here for the eighteenth time, with the intention, as in the previous seventeen years, to join in the funeral prayers and bury our dead -- our children, our brothers and sisters. It is indeed our enduring debt to the fallen. The bones of our loved ones, the *shuhada*, and the heroes of the Bosnian nation, who have been missing for eighteen long years will finally come to be lowered into their eternal resting place, the grave. Our commitment will not stop, and work will be incomplete until every missing person is found and returned to their loved ones -- and be afforded the respect and right to an Islamic burial. We will continue to come here to remember our dear and loved ones.

Indeed we will transmit the memory of our offspring, to teach them to do the same, and when we are no longer in this world, they may continue in our footsteps.

The tragedy that has befallen before us, we can not change. We can not revive the dead, but we will not forget the faces of the criminals who killed our brothers and sisters, as well as those that enabled their omission.

This Potoarska valley is our landmark, a place in which we can all constantly make *ziyara* (visit), so that we may remember the dead and our painful past – and with this refine and reenergise ourselves, never losing sight of how much harm our *shuhada* had to endure. We can take lessons from this to avert future genocides from taking place. In fact we do not want to be alone. Our invitation is always open to anyone who wants good and who does not live in the illusion that they can avoid evil.

We believe it is especially important when we are being joined by those in whose name crimes have been committed by criminals in Srebrenica. Although justice does sometimes seem very distant, and our hopes in it unclear, we remember the days of *jahiliya* when the girl being buried alive asks what crime she had committed to be murdered this way (Qur'an, Sura al-takwir, 8). Today, more than ever before, we are aware that the truth is the only weapon in the hands of those who possess no political or other forms of power.

And today, when we relive the pain and agony we are in fact in many

ways trying to stop, and it is clear it impinges upon the meaning of God's word:

“You will surely be tested in your possessions and in yourselves. And you will surely hear from those who were given the Scripture before you and from those who associate others with Allah much abuse. But if you are patient and fear Allah - indeed, that is of the matters [worthy] of determination. (Qur’an, Aal-Imran, 186)

As part of our faith, we should purify our intentions, be firm and resolute. We are determined to identify and bring to trial those who perpetuated the heinous crimes against the innocent of our nation. And this desire to know will forever remain a burdensome task on our shoulders.

My dear brothers and sisters,  
No one should live with the feelings of hatred, malice and revenge. Rather it is love that we need to propagate now. Love has to be stronger in order for it usher in us new life, give new hope and show the way out of the dire strait we find ourselves in.

Allah instructs us: “Those who endure with fortitude and forgive others, surely exhibit great courage in conducting their affairs”. (Qur’an, Al-Shura, 43). Let all our energies be directed towards discovering the truth, justice and forgiveness.

The life of a nation is determined internally, spiritually, rather than externally or politically. Therefore, our spiritual foundation must be immersed in the belief that people can live together, despite the difficult challenges they face.

Srebrenica is the sin of mankind, and the guilt of criminals. If all of us are not guilty, we all have sinned and are responsible for the suffering and evil committed in Srebrenica. We should focus on collecting and re-gathering of confessions of crimes and remorse for acts committed. It is time that the energy spent in laying new foundations is built on moral purification that brings repentance. Having said that we must not forget what had transpired in our country, that continues to pain us today and a great deal of sorrow. But at the same time we must not allow hatred and malice consume us, thus preventing us from moving on.

Acts of contrition will breathe a new life, because repentance frees people from the darkness of the past and its nightmarish spectre. Today, as we stand here at the *Musalla* (Prayer Space) in Potocari, on the site of warnings and calls to repentance, we wonder if there is a greater crime than killing an innocent person?

No, but the denial of crimes is a greater spiritual defeat. For that misery of the human spirit justification cannot be found, neither can it ever be forgiven.

Therefore, I urge all the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina to reject the glorification and denial of genocide. We must advance the spirit of a dignified life.

I invite all the people in Bosnia and beyond to help us to reach justice. Justice is essential to bringing back normality and stability. When people of different persuasions meet, it is our obligation to call people to peace and coexistence. Peace will reign between us when we all, no matter where we live, attempt to change what is within us – and when we accept each other and desire for each other what we desire for ourselves.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: “How you treat others - so they will treat you. What you are to others - such they will be to you. (Abu Na'im and Dajlami).

When we see evil being committed it is our duty to speak out against it. This is necessary in order to prevent harm in the future, that obligation can not be ignored.

Concerning the crimes and genocide against one (Bosniaks) means that in the same time we wish to prevent crimes against all others. The well-being of a nation, such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, is dependant on the well-being of all people, because the fate of all the nations of the world is conditioned in the same way.

The Srebrenica Genocide is the greatest crimes that can be committed by a human hand, and our pain is immeasurable. But, we have only one possible path: the path of meeting, repentance, forgiveness and coexistence. This place is the foundation and the pledge of our future. Equally and in their own way, Srebrenica is important for all of one's place of suffering, and the other place of repentance.

Yes, right here, in the clear and the whiteness of the many tombstones, we can find sincere and deep regret. Srebrenica can deliver a new life in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Dear mothers, I turn to you now, as you gave birth to us, fed and guarded us. Today I pray that your words are a source of encouragement for these people so we can move forward. Your pain and anguish is indeed great. But I believe that your love and your blessings for the survivors of the genocide are crucial for the progress of our children. We are all your children and together with you let us supplicate:

“Oh God, when we make a mistakes, give us the strength of Adam (peace be upon him) to repent; When we are obscured by heresy, illuminate our path such as that of Abraham (peace be upon him) as the orthodox faith; Should we be afflicted by an accident, teach us the lessons of Noah's (peace

be upon him) boat of salvation; If we are afflicted by the fear of tyrants, enable us as Musa (peace be upon him) established justice; If we are consumed by hate, save us Jesus (peace be upon him) showed love; and If we were expelled from our homes, give us the strength like Muhammad (peace be upon him) when he fought to return people to their rightful homes.

God Almighty,  
Unite our hearts in faith and love.  
Make firm our steps in truth and justice.  
Strengthen our will in brotherhood and harmony.  
Join our thoughts to our homes and the homeland.  
Oh God,  
We pray that the oppressors' swords are taken away,  
And that you grant the power of faith in truth and justice.  
Please, God, make grief become hope;  
Make revenge become justice;  
Make the tears of our mothers prayers of hope and love – and that Srebrenica never repeats again.

Ameen.

**[End]**

*Notes to editors:*

1. This speech by the Grand Mufti of Bosnia has been released by The Cordoba Foundation on the request of the Grand Mufti's Riyasat, Sarajevo – Bosnia-Herzegovina.
2. The Cordoba Foundation has a long established relationship with the office of the Grand Mufti in Bosnia for many years, supporting projects inside Bosnia and raising awareness around the Srebrenica Genocide, amongst other issues.
3. Please contact The Cordoba Foundation for interviews with officials from the Grand Mufti's office: [media@thecordobafoundation.com](mailto:media@thecordobafoundation.com) / [www.thecordobafoundation.com](http://www.thecordobafoundation.com)

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