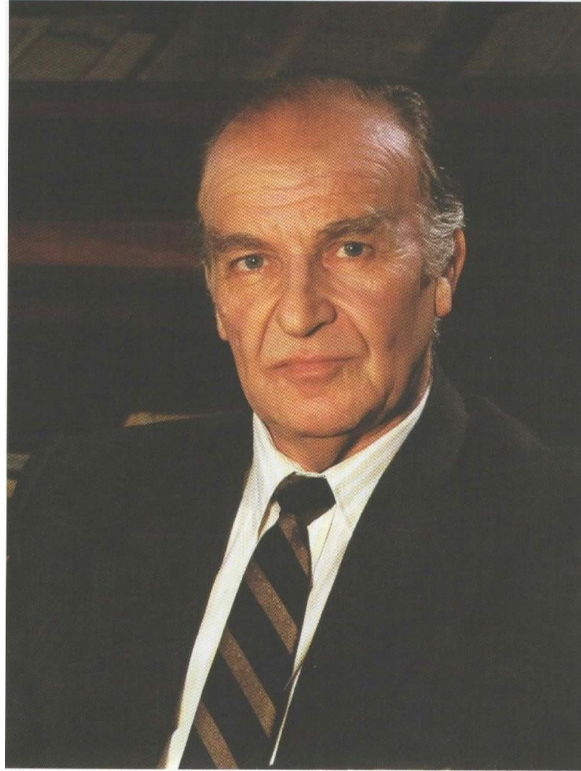




**Two-day online International Conference on the
Personality, Life and Contributions of
Alija Izetbegović**



**On
December 12-13, 2026**

Organized by

INSTITUTE OF OBJECTIVE STUDIES, NEW DELHI, INDIA

in collaboration with

**ALIJA IZETBEGOVIĆ FOUNDATION, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA
&
AHAS KIRKHS, INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY, MALAYSIA
&
UNIVERSITAS IBN KHLADUL BOGOR, INDONESIA**

IN RETROSPECT

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a South-East European country (on the Balkan Peninsula), which borders Serbia, Montenegro and Croatia and has a coastline of about 20 kilometers on the Adriatic Sea. With a moderate continental climate, it has hot summers and cold and snowy winters. Bosnia and Herzegovina currently has the population of around 2.9 million (about 1.5 million Bosniaks, 0.9 million Serbs and 0.45 million Croats, and 17 recognized “national minorities” including Jews, Roma, Albanians, Montenegrins, Ukrainians and Turks). Bosnia and Herzegovina has a bicameral legislature and a three-member presidency, each from the main ethnic groups (directorate system). The state is decentralized, reorganized by the Dayton Peace Agreement into two autonomous entities and a district—the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republika Srpska, and the Brčko District (governed by its own local government). The central government has limited powers over foreign affairs, defense, monetary policy, security, part of the judiciary, foreign trade and economic relations, transport and communications, civil affairs and human rights. The state is a member of the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the Central European Free Trade Agreement, and is also a founding member of the South-East European Cooperation Process. Bosnia and Herzegovina has been an European Union candidate since 2022, and a candidate for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization membership since 2010.

Bosnia has a very complex history since at least the Paleolithic period. Significant cultures such as Butmir and Kakanj appear to have emerged along the Bosna River during the Neolithic period. The Butmir culture, flourishing around 5100 to 4500 BC, is well known for its idiosyncratic pottery and anthropomorphic figurines. Intricately decorated ceramics and realistic human figures from this culture have been uncovered by excavations near Sarajevo.

Slavic peoples¹ settled in Bosnia during the 6th and 7th centuries, and by the 12th century Bosnia arose as a vassal state under local monarchs. Bosnia became an independent medieval kingdom in the 14th century, with King Tvrtko I (1377–1391) as its leader. Through this Bosnia established a distinct political and cultural diversity. In 1463, Bosnia became an important province of the Ottomans, who introduced administrative restructurings, urban expansion, mosques, inns and bridges, and marketplaces, promoting Sarajevo and Mostar as major cultural jurisdictions. Bosnia grew into a recognized area of religious plurality, with Muslims, Christians and Jews living together. In 1878, after the Congress of Berlin², Austria-Hungary occupied Bosnia and formally annexed it in 1908. The new administration streamlined infrastructure, governance and education. Nevertheless, separatist tendencies grew among Serbs and Croats. In 1914, Bosnia attracted global attention due to the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand (he was the heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary) in Sarajevo, carried out by a Serbian nationalist organization and which triggered the World War I.³ At the end of the World War I, Bosnia became a component of the political creation (the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes), later Yugoslavia.

¹Slavic peoples are an ethno-linguistic group primarily in Central, Eastern and South-eastern Europe, united by Slavic languages and shared cultural heritage.

²The Congress of Berlin (June, 13–July 13, 1878) was a diplomatic meeting of the major European powers aimed at revising territorial arrangements settled by the Treaty of San Stefano, after the Russo-Turkish War. The Congress was convened to resolve the consequences of the Russo-Turkish War (1877–1878), which resulted in significant territorial gains for Russia at the expense of the Ottoman Empire. The Treaty of San Stefano, signed in March 1878, created a large Bulgarian state under Russian influence, which alarmed other European powers, especially Britain and Austria-Hungary, which feared Russian expansion in the Balkans.
<https://www.bing.com/search?q=Congress+of+Berlin+in+1878&FORM=ANAB01&PC=DCTS>

³Archduke Franz Ferdinand Carl Ludwig Joseph Maria of Austria (Francis Ferdinand, December 18, 1863–June 28, 1914) was the heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary.

The World War II was a catastrophic period for Bosnia, which suffered bloody violence and ethnic war under fascist occupation, and genocide was committed against Bosniaks. After the end of the war in 1945, Bosnia and Herzegovina emerged as one of the six republics of socialist Yugoslavia ruled by the Communist Party led by Josip Broz Tito. That period is mostly remembered for industrialization and virtual harmony among Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats. Tito led the country from 1945 to 1980, advocating strategic neutrality with a command economy, which later transitioned from a command economy to market-based socialism. However, it faced major economic difficulties and growing Serbian chauvinism.

Economic collapse and intensification of nationalism resulted in the Yugoslav wars, causing Slovenia and Croatia to secede in 1991. Finally, the federation collapsed on April 27, 1992, with Serbia and Montenegro remaining as the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. With the disintegration of Yugoslavia, Bosnia and Herzegovina declared independence in 1992 which led to aggression by the Yugoslav army that helped the rebellion of part of the Bosnian Serbs. The war brought horrific ethnic cleansing of Bosniak Muslims, prolonged sieges and massacres, especially including the shocking genocide against Bosniaks in Srebrenica in 1995.

The suffering ended only with the Dayton Peace Agreement. Bosnia and Herzegovina is an independent but politically intricate and complex state with a system of power-sharing among Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats. In any case, from the medieval kingdom to today, as an Ottoman province, Austro-Hungarian territory, Yugoslav republic or modern independent state, Bosnia continues to be a unique multicultural society in Europe.

ALIJA IZETBEGOVIĆ IN PERSON

Against this background appears the prominent Bosnian personality, Alija Izetbegović (August 8, 1925–October 19, 2003), a political leader, Islamic theorist and writer who was the president of the Presidency of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina from 1990 to 1996, and a member and rotating chairman of the Presidency from 1996 to 2000. Alija Izetbegović was also the first president of the Party of Democratic Action and its founder.⁴

EARLY LIFE AND EDUCATION

Izetbegović's paternal grandfather, also called Alija, was from Belgrade, while as a soldier in Üsküdar, he married a Turkish woman named Sidika Hanım. After violence that broke out against Bosniaks in Serbia, he moved to Bosanski Šamac in Bosnia with his wife and five

On June 28, 1914, Franz Ferdinand and his wife were killed in Sarajevo by 19-year-old Gavrilo Princip, a member of the Serb organization "Young Bosnia". The assassination of Archduke Ferdinand was the most immediate cause of the World War I.

⁴Soon after his mandate began, the Serb community in the country rebelled and created the Republika Srpska, trying to prevent the independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina from Yugoslavia, which led to the outbreak of aggression against the newly internationally recognized country. Izetbegović led Bosnian forces whose backbone were Bosniaks, initially together with Croatian forces, until a separate war broke out between them, caused by Croatia's attempt, using Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina, to divide the country with Serbia. Relations between the two sides were resolved by the Washington Agreement, which Alija Izetbegović signed with the president of Croatia, Franjo Tuđman. The war in Bosnia and Herzegovina continued, with widespread ethnic cleansing and other war crimes, committed mainly by Bosnian Serb forces against the Bosniak and Croatian population throughout the country. This culminated in the massacre of Bosniak men in Srebrenica by Serbian forces, which would later be determined as genocide. Izetbegović was also a signatory of the Dayton Agreement, which ended the war in a stalemate after NATO bombing, and recognized the Republika Srpska as a partly-autonomous entity within Bosnia and Herzegovina. He continued to serve in this role until October 1996, when he became a member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, serving until his resignation in October 2000. Izetbegović was also the author of several books, the most significant are *Islam Between East and West*, *Islamic Declaration* and *My Escape to Freedom*.

children.⁵ Izetbegović's father, a merchant, was mobilized into the Austro-Hungarian army during the World War I, on the Italian front and suffered severe injuries that left him semi-paralyzed. In 1928, the family moved to Sarajevo, where Izetbegović (then 3 years old) received a secular education. In 1941, he helped found the association "Young Muslims", a youth activist organization. He remained politically active until his first arrest in 1946 by the communist authorities. Izetbegović completed his law studies at the Faculty of Law of the University of Sarajevo.

INTELLECT AND LEADERSHIP

In 1970, Alija Izetbegović published a political document, called the *Islamic Declaration*, which expressed his views on relations between Islam, the state and society. In this declaration he attempted to integrate Western-style progress with Islamic tradition, encouraging studies on Islamic revitalization.

In 1983, Alija Izetbegović was sentenced to 14 years in prison in a political trial by the communist authorities before the Sarajevo court for counter-revolutionary activity and verbal delict, together with other Bosniak intellectuals. The Supreme Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Federal Court partially dismissed the indictment in the appeals process. He was released after 5 and a half years, by decree of the Presidency of Yugoslavia in 1988. With the adoption of a multi-party system in the country, in 1990, Alija Izetbegović and other Bosniak activists founded the Party of Democratic Action, mainly with a Muslim character. Serbs and Croats also founded ethnically based parties. After the first democratic elections in 1990, in the process of power-sharing among parties, Alija Izetbegović became the Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This power-sharing arrangement did not last long due to ethnic tensions.

In 1991, fighting broke out in Slovenia and Croatia and it became immediately obvious that Bosnia and Herzegovina would soon be drawn into the conflict. Serbian nationalist representatives left the institutions of government of Bosnia and Herzegovina organizing a para-state in 1992, and cited as a pretext the adoption of the decision of the Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina on a referendum for independence. With the outbreak of conflict between the Croatian and Bosnian armed forces, Croatian nationalist representatives left the government in 1993.

Alija Izetbegović, at the beginning, put forward the idea of a loose confederation to protect the unified Bosnian state and strongly advocated a peaceful solution to the Yugoslav and Bosnia and Herzegovina crises. But he certainly did not promise "peace at any cost."

ABOUT THE BOSNIAN WAR

At the beginning of 1992, opposing national demands became irreconcilable. Bosniaks and Croats aspired to an independent Bosnia and Herzegovina; Serbs wanted the remaining Yugoslavia under Serb dominance. Alija Izetbegović was dissatisfied with the choice between options after which followed the Lisbon Agreement of 1992 to turn Bosnia into a tri-ethnic cantonal state. The agreement was tentatively signed by Alija Izetbegović for Bosniaks, Radovan Karadžić for Serbs and Mate Boban for Croats. Alija Izetbegović, however, withdrew and declared his opposition to any division of Bosnia at that time.

In an important decision in February 1992, the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, led by Alija Izetbegović, called a referendum for the recognition of Bosnia and Herzegovina as an

⁵Later he became the mayor of the town.

independent state, although Serbian members of the presidency unfoundedly considered it unconstitutional. The referendum was constitutional and in accordance with the opinions of the Badinter Commission of the European Community.

The referendum received support from 99.4 percent of votes with a turnout of 63 percent. Serbs mostly boycotted and did not agree with separation from Yugoslavia, that is, they established a para-state in part of the territory they wanted to annex to Serbia, where they later carried out ethnic cleansing and genocide.

The Parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted a formal declaration of independence, and Alija Izetbegović proclaimed independence on March 3, 1992, which came into force on April 6, 1992, when the EU and the USA recognized the state, followed by international recognition by the vast majority of UN members. Bosnia and Herzegovina was admitted to permanent membership in the UN on May 22, 1992.

ENDURANCE IN CRISIS

The Yugoslav army and Serbian paramilitary forces carried out attacks on, initially small, government forces throughout Bosnia. Alija Izetbegović secured that the UN expand the mandate of peacekeeping forces from Croatia to Bosnia and Herzegovina. Unfortunately, the war broke out immediately, and Serbian and Yugoslav military forces, taking control of large areas, attacked non-Serb civilian population in eastern and western Bosnia and placed the capital Sarajevo under the longest siege in modern history. They systematically looted and burned Bosniak houses and apartments, arrested and captured civilians, and many were beaten or killed.

Men and women were separated so that men would be detained in camps, and women left to live in unbearable unhygienic conditions, facing abuse and rape by Serb soldiers or policemen. Alija Izetbegović sincerely and consistently promoted the proposal of an integrated multi-ethnic Bosnia and Herzegovina with a central government.

Croats, with the support of Croatia, believed that equality was possible only through territorial internal division, distrustful of the Sarajevo government, they advocated the establishment of their own ethnically based state—the Croatian Republic of Herzeg-Bosnia. As chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Alija Izetbegović lived insecurely under siege by the Serb forces for over three years.

He condemned the failure of European countries to restrain the Serbian aggression and decided to turn to the Muslim world, but also to the United States of America. The Muslim world unanimously helped the government and people of Bosnia and Herzegovina, while the USA took leadership in seeking a political solution and shaped peace initiatives.

Alija Izetbegović agreed to the Vance-Owen peace plan, and the war between Bosniaks and Croats was finally ended by an agreement with American mediation in March, 1994. The situation on the ground was full of massacres and bombardment, the hardest any leader could experience. Formally, the war was ended by the Dayton Peace Agreement proposed by the USA in November, 1995. Alija Izetbegović was re-elected to the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the first post-war elections in 1996. The Dayton Agreement, for faster implementation, appointed a High Representative to oversee the implementation of the peace plan with later defined certain powers above the authorities of the Presidency and Parliament as well as entity authorities. Alija Izetbegović stepped down in October, 2000 at the age of 75, citing poor health, but remained highly respected among Bosniaks.

Alija Izetbegović passed away on October 19, 2003 due to heart ailment complicated by a sudden fall at home. He received honours at his bereavement and funeral took place after three days on October 22, 2003 from large number of Bosnian officials, dignitaries from 44 foreign countries, 105 members of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey and between 100,000 and 150,000 people, with his family receiving over 4,000 telegrams. Over 400 journalists attended the funeral and it was broadcast live on TV with 37 cameras.

REMEMBRANCE

The implementation of the Dayton Agreement of 1995 occupied the efforts of policy makers of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the international community for regional stabilization. Relations with neighbors, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro, were described as fairly stable. In 2010, the state received from NATO a Membership Action Plan. Full membership was expected in 2014 or 2015, depending on the progress of reforms, and NATO approved the Bosnian Membership Action Plan in December 2018. According to the Global Peace Index 2024, it is the 61st most peaceful country in the world.

It is considered that Alija Izetbegović left a deep mark as a thinker, politician and statesman. His ideas and interpretations shaped the political thought of Bosnia and Herzegovina before and after its international recognition. He wrote about Islam and contributed to its understanding which is appreciated across borders. He reflected upon and connected the verses of the Quran with social realities and empiricism. He stated—“Every rise of Islamic peoples, every period of dignity, begins with the affirmation of the Qur’an.”

Alija Izetbegović possessed the ability to re-examine social occurrences and phenomena in the context of his understanding of faith and time. He examined the relationship between Islam and modern civilization in his work *Islam Between East and West*, seeking essential values as foundations for a just society. He called upon the world to follow the Islamic commitment to morality, social justice and solidarity, and on its requirement to work with other religions for contribution to the promotion of civilization. He directly called on Muslims to re-examine their state of enlightenment, poverty, lack of unity and relevance to contemporary material and spiritual needs, of course in relation to other religions and worldviews. As a political leader, Alija Izetbegović was determined to face difficult situations with his personal strength and ideal principles of democracy, human rights and freedom of choice.

He advocated for Bosnia and Herzegovina as a multi-ethnic and multi-religious community with equal rights and opportunities for all citizens. In given circumstances, he was able to give strength to the religious, political and cultural identity of Muslims. His idea of learning from the past without glorifying it and building a better future from those experiences is highly valued. Alija Izetbegović, a leader, teacher and activist, taught to believe, practice, struggle, love and live and let-live in the homeland. His life truly opens a wide space for intellectual efforts, philosophical reflections and pragmatic assessments, relevant to his homeland, the whole world and influential ideologies and factors that spread across oceans.

His one of the statements made after the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement would be worthwhile to be quoted here:

“When you go through it all and endure it, when you rise again after a hundred stumbles, when you give up false hope and comfort and clench your teeth to openly face the truth, then you realize that the whole meaning of life is to fight evil.”

SELECTED WORKS

During his life, despite constant difficulties, Alija Izetbegović published extensively on various topics of interest. Some of his books are:

1. The Islamic Declaration: A Program for the Islamization of Muslims and the Muslim peoples
2. Problems of Islamic Revival: A collection of articles
3. Islam Between East and West: A study of the intersection of culture and religion in a globalized world
4. My Escape to Freedom: prison notes and reflections
5. Inescapable Questions: Autobiography

OBJECTIVE OF THE CONFERENCE

In order to leverage the multifaceted ideas and esteemed contribution of Alija Izetbegović and further his renowned intellectual legacy, the Institute of Objective Studies, New Delhi, under the international personality's series, is organizing a two-day online international conference on *The Personality, Life and Contributions of Alija Izetbegović*, on December 12-13, 2026, in collaboration with Alija Izetbegović Foundation, Bosnia And Herzegovina and AHAS KIRKHS, International Islamic University Malaysia and Universitas Ibn Khaldun Bogor, Indonesia.

It is essential to organise this conference on Alija Izetbegović who immensely contributed to multicultural tolerance, peace and harmony, processes of conflict resolution, maintaining the principles of democracy, freedom of choice and justice for all.

THEMATIC OVERVIEW

This conference will be a crucial advancement in acknowledging and enhancing the intellectual legacy of Alija Izetbegović. This conference will seek to unite varied perspectives and promote substantive dialogue to motivate further investigation and implementation of his ideas in tackling the modern day challenges confronting the Muslim World and beyond.

The following shall be the major themes for deliberations:

- i. Alija Izetbegović: Birth, Early Life and Education;
- ii. Alija Izetbegović as a principled thinker-Statesman and Guardian of the Sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- iii. Alija Izetbegović's intellect, faith and unwavering moral resolve during War and indifference of other Nations;
- iv. Alija Izetbegović's Morality and Ethics in Politics and International Relations;
- v. Alija Izetbegović's Global Importance of balancing ideals with practical survival, particularly in the Face of Conflict and Adversity;
- vi. Alija Izetbegović's Integration of faith and reason, advocating for a moral reform grounded in Islam with openness to Modernity;
- vii. Alija Izetbegović's concern for Unity and Devotedness among Muslims, challenging sectarian divisions and promoting togetherness.;

IMPORTANT DATES

Last date of Submitting Abstracts in 300-1000 words (in Word doc file and PDF)	August 31, 2026
Notification about Acceptance of the Abstract	September 15, 2026
Last date of submitting full paper in 3000-7000 words (in Word doc file and PDF)	November 15, 2026

GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE CONFERENCE

Language for Deliberation:	English
Registration for Participation in the Conference	Free
Link for Registration and Abstract Submission	
Web Page of the Conference for more details	

Note:

- 1) Oral presentation and paper submission is mandatory for inclusion in the proceedings of the conference in volume form, and issuance of a Certificate of Presentation for the conference.
- 2) All accepted and presented papers will be submitted for inclusion into a volume, to be prepared by the Institute of Objective Studies, based on the proceeding of the said conference, after thorough language editing, followed by proofreading, page setting and sending it to press for publication.
- 3) It's a responsibility of the author(s) to adhere to the guidelines of the conference. The copy right of publishing all the papers, which will be accepted and presented in the conference, will rest in the hands of the Institute of Objective Studies.
- 4) The accepted papers or its part cannot be submitted for publication to any other publication house/agencies/organisation, without written permission from the Institute of Objective Studies, New Delhi.
- 5) Papers not presented at the conference will not be considered for publication.
- 6) Institute of Objective Studies reserves the right to reject papers during the post-conference quality check if they fail to meet publication standards.

ENQUIRIES AT

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CONVENER		
PATRONS		
ORGANISING COMMITTEE		
PROGRAMME COORDINATORS		

BRIEF ABOUT THE ORGANIZERS

Institute of Objective Studies, New Delhi (India)

Institute of Objective Studies (IOS) New Delhi, India, is a non-political and not-for-profit, public organisation recognised at the national and international levels for promoting frontline academic research and publishing books and journals on contemporary issues and themes. IOS enjoys consultative status (Roster) with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the UN.

Since its inception in 1986, IOS has been widening the scope of its work by conducting surveys in areas of concern for the state and civil society, awarding scholarships to the meritorious in universities and actively engaging in the fields of social welfare, education and management. IOS is working on development models suited to Indian conditions, particularly for upliftment of the poor, marginalised and deprived sections. It is renowned for its initiatives and interventions to foster world peace and efforts to develop mechanisms and create conditions for conflict resolution. The IOS has always done its best to uphold the ideals of diversity, secularism, democracy, rule of law and constitutionalism. The Institute is known for its work on regional problems and among marginalised sections in different regions of India. It enjoys high credibility and visibility for bringing together a galaxy of social scientists, policy planners and social activists for creating an intellectual movement and network of scholars, community leaders and social

activists. The Institute has regional chapters at Aligarh, Calicut, Chennai, Kolkata and Patna.

IOS has signed MoUs with premier institutions of the world like International Islamic University Malaysia, Ibn Khaldun University Bogor, Indonesia, International Islamic Fiqh Academy, Jeddah, KSA etc. besides many Indian universities and research institutes for conducting joint academic research, programmes, translation etc.

IOS has published about 450 books on a range of subjects from economics, politics, technology and culture to development, religion, philosophy and human rights by eminent Indian and international scholars, writers and journalists. The Institute has so far organised more than 1300 programmes—conferences, consultations, seminars, symposia, workshops and discussions at national and international levels in collaboration with well-known universities and organisations in India and abroad.

For more details visit: <https://www.iosworld.org>

Alija Izetbegović Foundation, Bosnia And Herzegovina

Alija Izetbegović Foundation based at Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, supports the authentic interpretation of Alija Izetbegović's life and work, acting as a trustworthy and comprehensive representative of this legacy—his vision of multiculturalism and coexistence, belief in freedom and human rights, as well as his commitment to the ideals of social justice, equality and progress.

The Foundation strives to contribute to the progress of Bosnia and Herzegovina and prosperity of its peoples and citizens on the principles of freedom, equality, pluralism and respect for diversity. The paradigm of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a place of encounter, togetherness and coexistence, is accepted as a value in building the world of the future. Through research and cooperation with related institutions, the Foundation strive to contribute to a more profound knowledge and comprehensive understanding of Bosnia and Herzegovina's reality, security and betterment of the living conditions of its peoples and citizens, preservation and affirmation of its natural, cultural and historical wealth. With this aim in mind, the Foundation fosters personal development, social entrepreneurship and scientific approach towards the problems in the society, as well as the advancement of the connections and relations with the B-H diaspora. In particular, the Foundation endeavors to contribute to the Bosniak self-cognition, and the cognition of others about Bosniaks as an indigenous European Muslim people, building on the preservation and promotion of the intellectual legacy of Alija Izetbegović as a European Muslim thinker and the first President of the Presidency of the independent Bosnia and Herzegovina.

For more details, please visit: <https://www.alijazetbegovic.org/en/homepage/>

AHAS KIRKHS, International Islamic University Malaysia

Universitas Ibn Khaldun Bogor, Indonesia