



Gregorian and Reis Cerić: BiH Citizens are against terrorism

Principal Deputy High Representative, Raffi Gregorian, and Reisu-l-Ulema Mustafa eff. Cerić met today in Sarajevo and discussed how important it is that the world know that Bosnian Muslims abhor terrorism in all its forms.

Gregorian stressed that Bosnia and Herzegovina is a valued and important partner in the struggle against global terrorism, and that it is facing the same challenges as the US, Europe, and many other countries do in dealing with the issue. Gregorian recalled that just a few months after the terror attacks of September 11, 2001, the US President in his State of the Union address praised Bosnia and Herzegovina for its role in combating terrorism.

The Reis expressed concern that the headline of a recent press interview seemed to imply that Bosnians are actually harboring terrorists. Gregorian reassured the Reis that members of Al Qaida were not receiving shelter in BiH; instead his comments about terrorist connections were confined to a small number of former foreign fighters. Because BiH security and law enforcement agencies are capable of dealing with these people, there is no need to fear them.

The Principal Deputy High Representative and the Reis agreed that efforts by some to exaggerate the problem served only to promote Islamophobia and intolerance and need to be refuted.

"The challenge for Bosnia and Herzegovina has been to counter alien elements and ideologies which have sought to exploit the situation that existed in Bosnia during and after the war," Gregorian said. He noted that since 9/11 great improvements had been made in building BiH's institutional and legal capacities to contribute to the struggle against terrorism, but that more needed to be done.

Reis Cerić reminded the Principal Deputy High Representative of the Islamic Community's commitment to countering ideologies that promote intolerance and hate, and of the need for state authorities to help in that effort

if need be. Both agreed it was important to develop and adhere to the rule of law in dealing with such threats.