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BOSNIAN RADICALISM IN AUSTRIA

ABSTRACT: While assessing the level of security threats and researching the possibly increasing social tensions across Europe, we often concentrate on economically and politically leading states, even if the stability of the global system and the region's safety depend on smaller or medium sized countries as well. Even though the Austrian answer to today's tendencies – such as the migration wave of the recent years, the progress of radical Islamic groups and their successful recruitment – is the enhanced presence of law enforcement units and the introduction of corresponding legislation, the danger of radicalization itself and the inflow of international terrorism is still a challenge for the government. During the current migration crisis – originating mostly in the instability of the Middle East and some African regions – Austria mainly counts as a transit state, but along and after the Yugoslav crisis, major Austrian cities, such as Vienna, Linz or Graz were destinations for Bosnian migrants. Individuals from Bosnia and Herzegovina established several local Muslim communities – inter alia – in the abovementioned cities, which are still existing and operating today, providing a basis for Muslim migrants arriving in the country. The linked security threats, however, are requiring both local and national governments to give a comprehensive solution of these separate units, frequently questioning the positive effects of the inflow of workforce or the migration's purely humanitarian point of view. This study aims to point out the deficiencies in integration of these Muslim communities, to highlight the influence of radicalized Bosnian individuals and terrorist cells in Austria, and aims to draw attention to the global connections between the radicalized Austrian units and terror organizations, thereby to present Austria's level of security and mention some possible reactions to the endangering factors of current stability.

KEYWORDS: Austria, Islam, Yugoslav crisis, Bosnian radicalization, Islamic State, Vienna Wahhabis, Abu Tejma

INTRODUCTION – REMNANTS OF THE YUGOSLAV CRISIS

To be able to feature the risks of the radicalization in Austria, we first need to examine the regional consequences of the Yugoslav crisis, as the Bosnian Muslims who took part in the fighting were strengthened by foreign and local fundamentalists. Most of the immigrants in Bosnia and Herzegovina arrived militarily trained from states with Islamic majority, and there were several among them, who were dedicated to jihad, experienced fighting even in their states of origin.¹ Their number is between 300 and 1,700 but some studies suggest even

¹ Besenyő, J. “Not the invention of ISIS: Terrorists among immigrants”. *Journal of Security and Sustainability Issues*/2015. Volume 5, Number 1, 6.

higher rates.² The individuals arriving from the Middle East were followed by financial and technical support which reached the Balkans through Islamic aid organizations, as personal donations, or different, hardly traceable economical transactions.³ Favoring the radical groups, a concentration process started in many Bosnian settlements, which eventually resulted in cities with Muslim majorities or even homogenized Muslim communities. These areas, separating from the central government, built out a self-administration system based on the sharia law. The identification of these cities⁴ is also important in the case of Austria, taking that these radicalized areas can easily be the roots for those who are receptive enough to follow the teachings of radical imams, or the extreme ideology of some Muslim communities may result in potentially violent behavior.⁵ The uncontrolled migration of individuals liaising with the Al-Qaeda or other terrorist organizations⁶ from Bosnia to Western Europe after the Yugoslav crisis is an even bigger problem for Austria than the local engagement of Mujahideen in the conflict, because it could easily result in setting up potential forward bases in Austria to spread the radical views (or even building and activating further Islamic cells in Europe.)

Similarly to surrounding countries, Austria also faced a large-scale immigration from Bosnia and Herzegovina between 1992 and 1995.⁷ Austria hosted the third biggest mass of asylum seekers from Bosnia-Herzegovina after Germany (320,000 individuals) and Sweden (90,000 individuals).⁸ In the examined period, 95,000 people arrived in the country, of whom after a four-year integration period⁹ 10,000 moved to Western Europe,

² ICTY. "Case No. IT-04-83-T, Prosecutor v. Rasim Delic", 2008. <http://www.icty.org/x/cases/delic/tjug/en/080915.pdf>, Accessed on 12. July 2016. and Craig, P., Meyer, J. and Rempel, W. C. "Bosnia Seen as Hospitable Base and Sanctuary for Terrorists". LA Times. 2001. <http://articles.latimes.com/2001/oct/07/news/mn-54505/2>, Accessed on 12. July 2016.

³ Besenyő, J., Prantner, Z., Speidl, B. and Vogel, D. *Az Iszlám Állam – Terrorizmus 2.0*. Budapest: Kossuth Kiadó. ISBN 978-963-09-8441-6.

⁴ Radical centers in Bosnia are for example: Serici, Zeljezno, Polje Pojska, Mehurici, Bocinja, Travnik, Gornja Maoca, Grmusa, Velika Kladusa, and Debeljak villages. Source: Ioannis, M. "An outlook of radical Islamism in Bosnia", *Radical Islam Monitor in Southeast Europe*, Rimse. 2011. <http://www.rimse.gr/2011/03/an-outlook-of-radical-islamism-in.html>, Accessed on 12. July 2016.

⁵ This fact is proven in the latter by the case of Sabina Selimovic and Samra Kesinovic.

⁶ F. Kohlmann, E. "The Afghan-Bosnian Mujahideen Network in Europe", Swedish National Defence College. 2006. <http://www.aina.org/reports/tabmnie.pdf>, Accessed on 12. July 2016.

⁷ Migration is not a new phenomenon for Austria, in the era of the Monarchy, many thousand people moved to Austria from Hungary, the population of Vienna hosted for example up to 60% foreigners. At the end of the second world war, 1,4 million foreigners (mostly Germans and Eastern Europeans) were a part of the society. As a consequence of the revolution in 1956 about 84 000 individuals fled to Austria only from Hungary. In the 1970's migration growth, the Muslim communities strengthened. The immigrants came mostly from the former Yugoslavia and Turkey as labor force. Jandl, M. and Kraler, A. "Austria: A Country of Immigration?", 2003. <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/austria-country-immigration/>, Accessed on 12. July 2016 and UNHCR. "Flüchtlingsland Österreich", 2016. <http://www.unhcr.at/unhcr/in-oesterreich/fluechtlingsland-oesterreich.html>, Accessed on 12. July 2016.

⁸ Schöffl, R. "Jugoslawien-Kriege: 115.000 flohen nach Österreich", 2011. http://medienservicestelle.at/migration_bewegt/2011/06/21/kriege-in-ex-jugoslawien-fuhrten-zu-drei-grosen-fluechtlingsswellen/, Accessed on 12. July 2016.

⁹ Within the framework of this, the migrants are participating courses to get to know the Austrian society, politics and humanitarian values. This way they can get closer to the norms of the adopting society. Bundesministerium für Inneres. "Zusammen leben in Österreich", 2013. http://www.staatsbuergerschaft.gv.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Broschuere/RWR-Fibel.pdf, Accessed on 14. July 2016.

another 10,000 returned to Bosnia and Herzegovina, while the remaining 70,000 received a long term residence permit and access to the Austrian labor market.¹⁰

CURRENT PROCESSES

Considering the global processes, the number of Bosnian migrants in 2010 was 1.4 Million (this means 38.9% of all migrants)¹¹, in the same year, their main destinations were Germany and Austria. According to statistics from 2014, 386,000 migrants settled in Austria in the given time period (in 2014), which is about 22% of the whole Austrian population.¹² This highlights the fact that the country is no longer a transit state while Hungary remained as such until today. In 2015, an amount of 88,000 individuals filed refugee applications.¹³

The social acceptance of Bosnian minority is proven by the fact that the square in front of the Austrian Bosnian Cultural Centre in Wels got named „Trg Bosnjaka”, Bosnian Square. Beside of members of the local Bosnian minority and provincial assemblies also magistrates of the Islam community, like Husein Kavazovic, Bosnian mufti, Mustafa Ceric, President of the Bosnian World congress, or Muammer Zukorlic, leader of the Serbian Islamic community participated at the grand opening. In their speeches they claimed the square is a symbol of recognition and appreciation of Austria toward Bosnian people who had suffered a lot during the last century, besides it represents the gratitude for those Bosnian soldiers who helped to win back the freedom of Austria.¹⁴

According to data from 2015, there are 155,000 Bosnian migrants living in Austria.¹⁵ Similarly to other countries, the migration rates are leading to a growing Muslim minority, which already takes up to 6-7% of the population.¹⁶ The Bosnian Muslim Community of Austria (Islamska Zajednica Bosnjaka u Austriji), located in Vienna, is running 25 official mosques along the country.¹⁷ The biggest Bosnian communities are located in the cities of Graz, Linz, Wels, as well as Salzburg, Villach and Vienna.¹⁸ Beside these cities a further Muslim group can be found in Meidling, which was connected to fundamentalist (mostly

¹⁰ Jandl, M. and Kraler, A. “Austria: A Country of Immigration?”, 2003. <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/austria-country-immigration>, Accessed on 12. July 2016.

¹¹ European Asylum Support Office. “Asylanträge aus den westlichen Balkanstaaten”, 2014. <https://www.easo.europa.eu/sites/default/files/public/BZ0213708DEN.pdf>, Accessed on 14. July 2016.

¹² Wien.at. “Asylum seekers and migrants”, 2016. <https://www.wien.gv.at/english/health-socialservices/immigrant.html>, Accessed on 14. July 2016.

¹³ Bundesministerium für Inneres. “Vorläufige Asylstatistik”, 2015, 3. http://www.bmi.gv.at/cms/BMI_Asylwesen/statistik/files/Asylstatistik_Dezember_2015.pdf, Accessed on 14. July 2016.

¹⁴ Sandzakpress. “Otvoren „Platz der Bosniaken / Trg Bošnjaka“ u Welsu”, 2013. <http://sandzakpress.net/otvoren-%E2%80%9Eplatz-der-bosniaken-trg-bosnjaka%E2%80%9C-u-welsu>, Accessed on 13. July 2016.

¹⁵ Migration Policy Institute. “International Migrant Populations by Country of Origin and Destination, mid-2015 Estimates”, 2015. <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/international-migration-statistics>, Accessed on 14. July 2016.

¹⁶ Soeren, K. “Springboard for Global Jihad”, Gatestone Institute, 2014. <http://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/4651/austria-jihad> Accessed on 14. July 2016.

¹⁷ Islamska zajednica Bosnjaka u Austriji – IZBA website, <http://izba.at/>

¹⁸ Österreichischer Integrations Fonds. “Migration & Integration, Schwerpunkt: Bundesländer, zahlen. daten. fakten.”, 2015, 26. <http://www.integrationsfonds.at/themen/publikationen/zahlen-fakten/migration-integration-schwerpunkt-bundeslaender/>, Accessed on 14. July 2016.

Wahhabist¹⁹) organizations through the local radical imam, Abu Tejma's network. The jihadist unit in Meidling worked in close cooperation with other radical groups in Vienna, which also proves the complex construction of the Austrian radicalism.

Even though there is no statistical data, how many of the abovementioned 70,000 migrants arriving to Austria under the Yugoslav crisis were radical, this analysis aims to prove that members of different terror organizations indeed managed to get through the security control before, and not only obtained citizenship, but also gained an advantage to sustain connection between European cells and terror groups by focusing on three main issues:

1. Introduction of planned or executed terror attacks of individuals, attempts to assist or support terror organizations by „lone wolfs”²⁰ of Bosnian origins, as well as mentioning first or second generation radicals of Bosnian origin in Austria.

2. Review of personal and financial basis of radical Islamic organizations operating in Austria, detecting their contacts to Bosnian cells or participants of terror groups with Bosnian origins.

3. Presenting propaganda or supporting processes that originate in Austria and aim to support Middle-Eastern radical organizations and their actions by various methods through Bosnian individuals, cells or connections (for example: foreign fighters, donor activity).

RADICALS OF BOSNIAN ORIGIN IN AUSTRIA

Even if the central government have not provided information on urgent threat, and also only 17%²¹ of the general public fears an eventual terror attack in Austria (in other studies this percentage can be up to 40)²², a number of official studies had to highlight the importance of first- and second generation Muslim migrants and radical Bosnian migrants in the country. The influence of extremist groups demonstrably increased among the Muslim communities,²³ this is also proven by the increasing number of travelers to Syria, which

¹⁹ Wahhabism is a fundamentalist form of Islam mainly gaining followers in the Middle East and the Balkan. The gist of it is to enforce the studies of Coran in the most radical interpretation. Even though it is originated in Saudi-Arabia it is more determining in the Balkans now. Wahhabi center are located in the following regions: Serici, Zeljezno, Polje Pojska, Mehurici, Bocinja, Travnik, Gornja Maoca, Grmusa, Velika Kladusa and Debeljak villages. One of its more powerful actors is the radical Islamic organization called „Poziv u Raj” (Invitation to Heaven) operating in Bihac, Sanski Most, Maglaj, Zenica, Travnik, Tuzla, and Tesanj villages.

²⁰ A lone wolf terrorist is an individual committing actions supporting the ideology of radical organizations, but they are not direct members of those groups, they rather plan and plot the attacks alone. Pantucci, R. “A Typology of Lone Wolves: Preliminary Analysis of Lone Islamist Terrorists”, 2011. http://www.trackingterrorism.org/sites/default/files/chatter/1302002992ICSRPaper_ATypologyofLoneWolves_Pantucci.pdf, Accessed on 14. July 2016.

²¹ Wikileaks. “Austria - 2006 Country report on terrorism”, 2006. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/06VIENNA3584_a.html, Accessed on 13. July 2016.

²² Counter Extremism Project. “Austria: Extremism & Counter-Extremism”, 2016. 2. http://www.counterextremism.com/sites/default/files/country_pdf/AT-04222016.pdf, Accessed on 13. July 2016.

²³ The case of Firas Goudini, an Austrian citizen sympathizing with ISIS also drew the attention of the media. He tried to travel to Syria to join the forces in 2014. Before he had left, he wrote an open letter on a social media site to encourage people to radicalize and support the Syrian fundamental forces. Source: Counter Extremism Project. “Austria: Extremism & Counter-Extremism” 2016. <http://www.counterextremism.com/countries/austria>, Accessed on 13. July 2016.

has reached up to 300 individuals by 2015.²⁴ Some sources mention another 70 individuals who are trying to make their way back from the front lines, most of them are of Chechen, Bosnian or Turkish origin.²⁵

In accordance with the global trends, the authorities manage to filter a growing number of individuals with terrorist backgrounds among migrants, before they could strengthen the bases of European radicalism.²⁶ The enhanced law enforcement work is however not always enough to control every member of the arriving and settled segregated Muslim communities,²⁷ which is why in many cases security breaches can only be detected when an extremist becomes active.

The tension between radical Muslims and the western governments and society could already be detected back in 2007, when on 1st October 42-year-old Bosnian Asim Cejvanovic tried to go through the security gate of the American Embassy in Vienna with an explosive charge in his backpack. Although he was not connected to any terror organizations, not even later on, his radical act was related to his war time experiences from the Yugoslav crisis. Cejvanovic's mental instability was probably used by his Wahhabi neighbor of Bosnian origin, as he offered to pay Cejvanovic 20 Euros if he would successfully place the bomb inside the Embassy. Even if Cejvanovic is only a victim considering the actual terror plot both Bosnian men were members of the extremist group called the Vienna Wahhabis and were also connected to the later mentioned Muhamed Porca.²⁸

The conversion of radical Muslims in Austria can also be traced back to a radical imam, to the earlier mentioned Mirsad Omerovic (aka Abu Tejma), who was born in Tutin, Serbia. In the area bordering Montenegro, the Sandzak region, a large number of Muslim Bosnians are settled, who are known to be concentrated in highly radical settlements (like the towns of Tutin, Novi Pazar, Sjenica or Prijepolje).²⁹ The town of Tutin – besides Gjorna Maoca – is one of the most radical centers of Wahhabism in the Balkans.³⁰ Between 2002 and 2008, Omerovic travelled to Mecca with a Saudi-financed scholarship, where he assumingly learnt about radicalism, built his connections to the Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State. As he returned to Bosnia, he started to preach and recruit in the name of radical Islam. He settled in Austria with his wife and six children, and worked as the preacher (and radical leader) of the Altun Alem Mosque in Meidling. Tejma recruited most of the foreign fight-

²⁴ The Soufan Group. "Foreign fighters: An Updated Assessment of the Flow of Foreign Fighters into Syria and Iraq", 2015. http://soufangroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/TSG_ForeignFightersUpdate3.pdf, Accessed on 13. July 2016.

²⁵ Counter Extremism Project. "Austria: Extremism & Counter-Extremism", 2016. 2. http://www.counterextremism.com/sites/default/files/country_pdf/AT-04222016.pdf, Accessed on 13. July 2016.

²⁶ Muhammad Ghani Usman, plotter of the Mumbai terror attack in 2008 was arrested this way. Usman is a Pakistani born radical with deep connections to ISIL. Source: Faiola, A. and Mekhennet, S. "Tracing the path of four terrorists sent to Europe by the Islamic State", 2016. https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/how-europes-migrant-crisis-became-an-opportunity-for-isis/2016/04/21/ec8a7231-062d-4185-bb27-cc7295d35415_story.html, Accessed on 13. July 2016.

²⁷ Besenyő, J. "Not the invention of ISIS: Terrorists among immigrants", *Journal of Security and Sustainability Issues*, Volume 5, Number 1, 5-20. 2015.

²⁸ Anes, A. "Investigation into Backgrounds of Bosnians Involved in Vienna Plot", 2005. http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=4462&no_cache=1#V4X9ptlcQwk, Accessed on 13. July 2016.

²⁹ Ioannis, M. Balkan jihadists in Syria, 2013. <http://serbianna.com/analysis/archives/2362>, Accessed on 13. July 2016.

³⁰ Pejčić, M. "Minority Rights in Serbia", 2007. http://www.pcr.uu.se/digitalAssets/67/67531_1mfs_pejicic.pdf, Accessed on 13. July 2016.

ers from Austria to Syria. His family currently lives in Vienna.³¹ The second center of the spreading radicalism in Austria is the Sahaba/Al-Tawhid Mosque, led by Muhamed Porca, at 61 Murlingengasse Vienna. Porca, a fundamentalist and recruiter was also the leader of the Wahhabi group in Vienna until his imprisonment in 2007.³² The recruitments of Vienna and Meidling are expanded by Safet Kuduzovic, the leader of the Bosnian Salafī group in Linz (Bosnian Salafist Kewser Dzemmat) who urged on radicalization in his speeches as well as online, through the site of Studio-din.³³ Husein Bilal Bosnic, former fighter among the Mujahideen of Bosnia and Herzegovina, also participated in the propaganda, he travelled to Austria to recruit, and widen his extremist beliefs many times.³⁴

In March 2016 the Austrian authorities captured also 49-year-old Fikret Begic of Bosnian origin (he moved from Konjic to Graz), a recruiter of the Islamic State, who also planned to join the fighting forces in Syria himself.³⁵

The case of 15-year-old Sabina Selimovic and one year older Samra Kesinovic was in the spotlight of the media for a long time. Their story also proved the instability of the Muslim minority of Bosnian origins. The two girls were recruited and strengthened in the ideology by Abu Tejma, which resulted in a planned trip to Syria in April 2014 so that they could participate in the fight by marrying members of the Islamic State. Both of them were born in Bosnia. Evidence also claims that Abu Tejma sent the young women to the frontline through the cell in Vienna. Both of them lived in Rakka until their death in 2015.³⁶

While encountering the radical Bosnian individuals, we have to take into consideration the role of radical Bosnian centers. As the most fundamentalist settlements, we can mention Gornja Maoca, Seici, Zeljezno, Polje Pojska, Mehurici, Bocinja, Velika, Kladusa and Debeljak, as well as Bihac, Sanski Most, Maglaj, Zenica, Travnik, Tuzla and Tesanj Pogo, cities of Reliva and Osve.³⁷ The local Bosnian fighters joining the forces in Syria were mostly recruited by Nusret Sulejman Imamovic, a Sunni leader of the city, who is presently fighting along the Al-Nusra Front.³⁸ Concentrating on these fundamentalist black spots' migrants and with increased monitoring of their background and networks, we may filter some of the radicals arriving in Western countries. For example, Nedžad Balkan (aka Ebu Muhamed) is originated from Gornja Maoca (where he used to teach Wahhabi views at the local school)³⁹

³¹ Athos, A. "ISIS death cult brides and Misrad Omerovic aka 'Ebu Tejma'", 2014. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/isis-death-cult-brides-misrad-omerovic-aka-ebu-tejma-alexander-athos?forceNoSplash=true>, Accessed on 13. July 2016.

³² Bozinovich, M. "Bosnian Muslim Wahabbis behind terror plot on US Embassy", 2007. <http://serbianna.com/blogs/bozinovich/archives/104>, Accessed on 13. July 2016.

³³ Juan Carlos, A. "Wahhabism in Bosnia-Herzegovina - Part One", 2008. http://www.bosnia.org.uk/news/news_body.cfm?newsid=2468, Accessed on 13. July 2016.

³⁴ Giacalone, G. "Western Balkans as a hotbed for Jihadist extremism", 2016. <http://kedisa.gr/en/western-balkans-as-a-hotbed-for-jihadist-extremism/>, Accessed on 13. July 2016..

³⁵ Toe, R. "Austria Jails Bosnian for Recruiting for ISIS", 2016. <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/austria-jails-bosnian-citizen-for-recruiting-fighters-03-04-2016> Accessed on 13. July 2016.

³⁶ Counter Extremism Project. "Austria: Extremism & Counter-Extremism", 2016. <http://www.counterextremism.com/countries/austria>, Accessed on 13. July 2016.

³⁷ Dzidic, D. "Bosnia's Wartime Legacy Fuels Radical Islam", Balkan Insight, 2015. <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/bosnia-s-wartime-legacy-fuels-radical-islam>, Accessed on 13. July 2016.

³⁸ US Department of State "Designations of Foreign Terrorist Fighters", 2014. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2014/09/232067.htm>, Accessed on 13. July 2016.

³⁹ Juan Carlos, A. "Wahhabism in Bosnia-Herzegovina - Part One", 2008. http://www.bosnia.org.uk/news/news_body.cfm?newsid=2468, Accessed on 13. July 2016.

and travelled a lot between Vienna and the Bosnian radical village, along with Wahhabi and Salafi Ened Muhovic, Sabahudin Fljuljanin, Nevzudin Bajraktarevic and Sulejman Delic. All of them are connected to the spread of Bosnian fundamentalism and built relations between Vienna and terror organizations in the Middle East.⁴⁰

Alen Rizvanovic, the designer of the terror attack on 20th June 2015 in Graz, was born in Bihac. As a follower of Wahhabi and Salafi ideology, he proved his commitment towards fundamentalist groups with an action resulting in 3 dead and 36 injured.⁴¹

Spreading fundamentalism at an international level, keeping up the commitment of already activated individuals, and building and stabilizing the network between actors, groups and cells are tasks for the recruiting imams and central propagandists like the reviewed Abu Tejma. Through this method, organizations are able to use radicalized Bosnians to initiate new cells in Western Europe, while the increased level of unchecked migration may lead to the boom in newly-established fundamentalist Muslim communities. The cases of the radicalized Bosnians in Austria shall prove that maintaining security requires stricter background checks for individuals coming from settlements with radical leaders when travelling to the West. Also, in order to limit their ability to persuade instable youth, local integration mechanisms of first and second generation of migrants are needed. Combining official programs with broadened open dispute about the aspects of radicalization may help in decreasing the number of radical Islam's foreign followers.

ADVANCEMENT OF GLOBAL TERROR ORGANIZATIONS IN AUSTRIA

The importance of the advancement of the Islamic State and Al-Qaeda in terms of Bosnia was already confirmed in the earlier chapter of this paper, but besides the two reviewed mosques (Altun Alem Mosque and the Sahaba/Al-Tawhid Mosque) and many recruiters it is also of great significance to mention the organizations which serve as bases for the Middle Eastern and African terror groups in Europe, by building radical centers for these communities. In 2007 Mustafa Cerić, leader of Bosnian Islamic communities, declared that there are many terror groups with Islamic backgrounds in Vienna, which due to their connections are already wide spread in Bosnia and Herzegovina as well.⁴² This seems to be confirmed through the actions of Mevlid Jasarevic, who was radicalized by the group of Muhamed Porca in Vienna. He performed an attack on the American Embassy in Sarajevo in November 2011.

Fundamentalism in Austria is not entirely caused by the successful propaganda of the Islamic State and the Al-Qaeda. In the last decades, in accordance with global trends, the authorities had to face many diversified assault attempts in Austria. Even though the mentioned organizations are mostly in the spotlight of the media, many other groups, like Hamas, are trying to gain ground in the country.⁴³ In July 2014 the Austrian Court of Justice had to

⁴⁰ Wikileaks. "AUSTRIA/CROATIA/BOSNIA/UK/SERBIA - Paper says Bosnian police, security agencies must join forces against terrorism", 2011. https://wikileaks.org/gjfiles/docs/75/753664_austria-croatia-bosnia-uk-serbia-paper-says-bosnian-police.html, Accessed on 13. July 2016.

⁴¹ Spencer, R. "Austria: Muslim drives car into crowd, killing 3, then gets out and stabs passersby", 2015. <https://www.jihadwatch.org/2015/06/austria-muslim-drives-car-into-crowd-killing-3-then-gets-out-and-stabs-passersby> Accessed on 13. July 2016.

⁴² Wikileaks. "Austrian media highlights Wikileaks files", 2007. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/07VIENNA1984_a.html, Accessed on 13. July 2016.

⁴³ Weinthal, B. "Radical Islam in Austria is active and growing", *The Long War Journal*, 2014. http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2014/11/austrias_radical_isl.php Accessed on 13. July 2016.

recognize the presence of the Al-Shabaab terror group, as an Austrian citizen was sentenced to prison for participating in radical military trainings in Africa.⁴⁴ Some researchers assume that through hardly traceable financial support of the Muslim Brotherhood, or financial aids from Saud-Arabia, the radicalization of the next generation starts in moderate Muslim kindergartens or elementary schools.⁴⁵

Beside the ‘Bosnian Salafi Kewser Dzemmat’ unit, led by Safet Kuduzovic, we have to mention the influence of the ‘Vienna Wahhabis’ organization (led by Mirsad Omerovic, seated in Vienna), that played an important role in arranging and uniting the radical Muslims of Bosnian origin and then sending about 160 of them to the front lines in Syria.⁴⁶ Another radical organization that is uniting fundamentalist Austrians of Bosnian origin is the Poziv u Raj (Invitation to Heaven).⁴⁷ The Bosnian connections are supposedly deeper with this organization, taking that it was founded in Bosnia and Herzegovina and that its operations are mainly located there, Austria in this case may be mentioned as an ‘outsourced center’. The Vienna-based Kelimetul Haqq organization should also be mentioned, where Bosnian and Serbian Muslims provide the majority of the followers. This organization openly supports the Al-Takfir w’al-Hijra radical group (which can be connected to the Muslim Brotherhood and the Al-Qaeda) with online videos and radical Islamic propaganda.⁴⁸ According to data of the Combating Terrorism Center, many radical Bosnians joined the war in the Middle East through Austria⁴⁹, this way they could not only reduce their traceability but for a limited amount of time they could enjoy the hospitality of radical centers in Austria.

AUSTRIAN DONOR ACTIVITY

While analyzing the growth of terrorism, not only its physical appearance or the active engagement of the radical communities should be reviewed, but there should be some light shed on the economic background and also on the influence of present propaganda and recruitment. Many sources prove that the Bosnian connections are also playing an important role in this process by helping radical Austrians participate in and support extremist organizations. In the last couple of years many sources confirmed that foreign donors with Bosnian connections support radical groups by financial means through Austrian institutes.⁵⁰

The organization with mostly Chechen and Bosnian members, led by Mirsad Omerovic, also proves the existence of such transactions. The Vienna Wahhabis also functioned as a

⁴⁴ U.S. Department of State. “Chapter 2. Country Reports: Europe Overview”, 2013. <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2012/209981.htm>, Accessed on 13. July 2016.

⁴⁵ Prof. Dr. Ednan, A. “Evaluierung ausgewählter Islamischer Kindergärten und – gruppen in Wien, Tendenzen und Empfehlungen”, 2016. https://iis.univie.ac.at/fileadmin/user_upload/p_iis/Abschlussbericht__Vorstudie_Islamische_Kindergarten_Wien_final.pdf, Accessed on 13. July 2016.

⁴⁶ King, M. “INVESTIGATION: How foreign-trained Islamic hate preachers are spreading jihad in Europe”, 2015. <http://www.express.co.uk/news/world/561672/Special-investigation-how-foreign-trained-Islamic-hate-preachers-spread-jihad-Europe>, Accessed on 13. July 2016.

⁴⁷ Ioannis, M. “Central European radical Islamist snapshot”, 2014. <http://serbianna.com/analysis/archives/2670>, Accessed on 13. July 2016.

⁴⁸ Ioannis, M. “Nedžad Balkan: The Face of Southeastern Europe’s Newest Radical Threat”, 2011. <http://serbianna.com/blogs/michaletos/archives/941>, Accessed on 13. July 2016.

⁴⁹ Holman, T. “Foreign Fighters from the Western Balkans in Syria”, 2014. <https://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/foreign-fighters-from-the-western-balkans-in-syria>, Accessed on 13. July 2016.

⁵⁰ Wikileaks. “Austria – 2006 Country report on terrorism”, 2006. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/06VIENNA3584_a.html Accessed on 13. July 2016.

logistical and financial center, offering support for different terrorist organizations (through its leading connections with the Islamic State), and it served as a connecting factor between Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi and the European cells.⁵¹ Omerovic himself also participated in the financial support of radical Islam. Through the organization called True Religion Salafi (Die Wahre Religion), together with Abu Dujana and Abu Abdullah, he not only took part in the anti-western propaganda but also travelled throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina many times and donated money to Middle Eastern Salafi purposes (like the organization Poziv u Raj).⁵²

Ayadi Shafiq Ben Mohamed, leading member of the Tunisian wing of the Al-Qaeda (AQIM in Tunisia) also had an Austrian and Bosnian citizenship, although he was of Tunisian origin. According to evidence, Shafiq supported many terror organizations through his Muwafaq Fund in Austria.⁵³

The Bosnian Islamic community already drew the attention of Austrian authorities to the individual donors and hidden transactions. They highlighted the work of Adnan Buzar, a Bosnian born Wahhabi imam living in Austria. He is related to the Palestinian Sabri al-Banna (aka Abu Nidal), who was one of the most feared terrorists in the 1980's. Al-Banna died in 2002 whilst fighting in Iraq.⁵⁴ Further evidence against the imam is that with Porca he was connected to the Wahhabi members of the al-Tawhid Mosque. The two men supported the Bosnian born Jusuf Barcic's Wahhabi community in Bocinje not only with propaganda but also with monetary donations. Barcic's group members were mostly Mujahedeen of Arabian origins who earlier fought in the Muslim forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Barcic also used to be a deputy of Zenica in the International Islamic Relief Organization (IGASA), which is located in Vienna. The organization was supposedly connected to Saudi-Arabian donors who would support the growth of the Wahhabi ideology on the Balkan Peninsula in many proven ways.⁵⁵

Beside the traceable transactions, the flow of financial means can also be detected between the two countries. A 'supply route' was built in the 1990s with an agreement, leading from Austria through Maribor, Slovenia, Split, Croatia to the Bosnian fighting areas.⁵⁶ A proof of the connection is the arrest of Muhamed Rustempasic in October 2009 at the Bosnian border, who was caught transferring a supply of weapons along the route of Germany-Austria-Bosnia

⁵¹ The Local. "Jihadist 'mastermind' on trial in Graz", 2016. <http://www.thelocal.at/20160222/jihadist-mastermind-on-trial-in-graz> Accessed on 14. July 2016.

⁵² Ioannis, M. "Central European radical Islamist snapshot", 2014. <http://serbianna.com/analysis/archives/2670>, Accessed on 13. July 2016.

⁵³ Declan, F. "AL-QAEDA terror chief is hiding in Ireland; exclusive 40-Year-Old Suspect Is Bin Laden Associate", 2003. <https://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-102942080.html> Accessed on 15. July 2016. and Money Jihad. "UN removes Saudi businessman from Al Qaeda list", 2012. <https://moneyjihad.wordpress.com/tag/terrorist-financing/page/44/> Accessed on 15. July 2016.

⁵⁴ Anes, A. "Investigation into Backgrounds of Bosnians Involved in Vienna Plot", 2007. http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=4462&no_cache=1#V4X9ptlcQwk, Accessed on 15. July 2016.

⁵⁵ Directorate-General for External Policies of the Union. "Salafist/wahhabite financial support to educational, social and religious institutions", 2013. 15. [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/join/2013/457136/EXPO-AFET_ET\(2013\)457136_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/join/2013/457136/EXPO-AFET_ET(2013)457136_EN.pdf), Accessed on 15. July 2016.

⁵⁶ Hajdinak, M. "Smuggling in Southeast Europe - The Yugoslav Wars and the Development of Regional Criminal Networks in the Balkans", 2002. http://pdc.ceu.hu/archive/00001572/01/Smuggling_in_SE_EU.pdf, Accessed on 15. July 2016.

and Herzegovina while openly supporting radical units. Later on, his brother, in the company of three Mujahedeens, was also accused of terrorism and got arrested.⁵⁷

The largest financial deal between the two states was carried out by the Third World Relief Agency (TWRA), located in Vienna. The transactions of the company were disclosed by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY).⁵⁸ According to their research, between 1992 and 1995 the organization led by Elfatih Hassanein (aka Al-Fatih Ali Hassanein)⁵⁹ donated over 2.5 billion dollars for the stabilization of Bosnia, out of which, 175 million dollars were spent on weapon transfers.⁶⁰ These transactions are an even more complex issue after the end of the Yugoslav crisis, since the uncounted amount of equipment may easily flow across borders to the turbulent Middle-East.

Among the donations of Austrian institutes to Bosnia – we have to add, that in many cases, financial assets were only transferred through Austria, they originated mostly in Middle Eastern and African Muslim organizations (mainly from Saudi-Arabia, Iran and Pakistan) – some amounts of money can be traced back to connections with Al-Qaeda.⁶¹ According to experts, the volume of aids from Austria to Bosnia reached the amount of 500-800 million dollars between 1994 and 1995.⁶² Using the same network, further questionable processes functioned in the region, for example, during and after the Yugoslav crisis the Bosnian Embassy in Austria issued at least 300 official Bosnian passports to migrants out of Muslim countries, without any special obligations or criteria.⁶³

Austria is a member of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), which aims to spot the financial supporters of terrorism by detecting the donors and freezing their accounts, as well as creating laws and documents that criminalize such actions (for example the use of untraceable financial transactions through NGOs to support radicalism). According to a FATF report of 2014, Austria passed the ‘Sanction Law’, which enables authorities to freeze accounts and to take further measures to fight terrorism.⁶⁴

⁵⁷ Ioannis, M. “Nedžad Balkan: The Face of Southeastern Europe’s Newest Radical Threat”, 2011. <http://serbianna.com/blogs/michaletos/archives/941>, Accessed on 20. July 2016.

⁵⁸ ICTY “Cases – Prlic, 081118IT”, Page 34827, 2008. <http://www.icty.org/x/cases/prlic/trans/en/081118IT.htm>, Accessed on 20. July 2016.

⁵⁹ Hassanein was supposedly a close friend of Alija Izetbegovic, the first Muslim president of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Source: Anes, A. “Wahhabism: from Vienna to Bosnia”, 2007. <http://www.islamdaily.org/en/wahabism/5523.wahhabism-from-vienna-to-bosnia.htm>, Accessed on 20. July 2016.

⁶⁰ Hajdinak, M. “Smuggling in Southeast Europe - The Yugoslav Wars and the Development of Regional Criminal Networks in the Balkans”, 2002. 11. http://pdc.ceu.hu/archive/00001572/01/Smuggling_in_SE_EU.pdf, Accessed on 20. July 2016.

⁶¹ ICTY “Cases – Prlic, 081118IT”, Page 34828, 2008. <http://www.icty.org/x/cases/prlic/trans/en/081118IT.htm>, Date of access: 20. July 2016. and John, Pomfret. “Bosnia’s Muslims Dodged Embargo”, 1996. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/inatl/longterm/bosvote/front.htm>, Accessed on 20. July 2016.

⁶² Center for the Study of Democracy “Anti-corruption in Southeast Europe: First steps and policies”, 2002. 13. <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/28954/15.pdf>, Accessed on 20. July 2016.

⁶³ Anes, A. “Wahhabism: from Vienna to Bosnia”, 2007. <http://www.islamdaily.org/en/wahabism/5523.wahhabism-from-vienna-to-bosnia.htm>, Accessed on 20. July 2016

⁶⁴ FATF “Mutual Evaluation of Austria: 3rd Follow-up Report”, 2014. <http://www.fatf-gafi.org/countries/a-c/austria/documents/fur-austria-2014.html>, Accessed on 20. July 2016.

CONCLUSION

The relations of Austria and radicalism, as well as phenomenal changes in other Western countries became a central topic of studies. Even though social deficiencies do not primarily strengthen extremism, because of its strategic location and the widening Middle Eastern and Bosnian connections in the past decades, Austria has to handle the issue of the spreading radical Muslim ideology. The Western states are linked to Bosnia and Herzegovina through many proven examples of global terrorism, considering both micro- or macro-sized attacks, for example, executed attacks or terror plots, organizations and communities under the leadership of radical Bosnian imams, or the international financial transactions tracing back to Bosnia. This study reviewed how Austrian cells are backed by fundamentalists or members of associations of Bosnian origin. Considering the available information, we can claim, that their aims can be sorted into three main categories:

- Propaganda movements against Western states and their interests, recruitment, radicalization. In this case, the fundamental imams arriving from radical Bosnian areas (or getting educated or trained in Saudi-Arabia or other Muslim states), their activity and persuasion are of great significance. For instance, we can mention the influence of Mirsad Omerovic (Abu Tejma), who was able to expand the group of active followers of radical Islam with more than a hundred individuals in Austria.
- Securing the operation of Austrian cells by building and keeping connections and raising financial and personnel assets. In the process of recruitment, the communities run by the imams, and also foreign support are important. The construction of the organizations and the commitment of their members, such as the Vienna Wahhabis or Poziv u Rai, are clearly affected by the ideologies originating in Bosnia, and the motivation of global terrorist groups (such as the Islamic State or Al-Qaeda) sweeping through radical individuals or Bosnian cells.
- Money and weapon transfer crossing borders, transport of foreign fighters to the Balkans or the Middle East, in which companies as the Third World Relief Agency (TWRA) based in Vienna, or the International Islamic Relief Organization (IGASA) had a significant role by keeping the processes of supporting radicals between Austria and Bosnia Herzegovina undetectable.

There is a robust conflict in the relations between Austria and its Muslim minority, which seems to be difficult to ease, even though the legal changes of the last couple of years were correspondent to that situation. In addition to the increased international actions and the higher level of general security measures, Austrian law enforcement authorities are trying to fight radicalism with an enhanced presence and border security, and by raids both in Austria and Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to filter out potential or proven supporters of the Islamic State or those of any other terror organization.⁶⁵ It is the question of the future

⁶⁵ The content of this research can be expanded with the relevant chapters of the Austrian Islamic law of 2015, as well as with the action called Operation Palmyra, executed on the territory of Austria and Bosnia and Herzegovina with the participation of authorities of both states. During this operation, authorities managed to capture 29 individuals in the cities of Vienna, Linz and Graz, and further radicals in the villages of Gornja Maoča, Zeniza, Bihać and Brčko were also arrested. Austrian Society for Policy Analysis “Raids in Austria and Bosnia-Hercegovina”, 2014. <http://www.ogp.ac/en/news/raids-in-austria-and-bosnia-hercegovina.html>, Date of access: 20. July 2016. and Theuretsbacher, W.–Lindorfer, R. “Terror Town Down”, 2015. <http://www.hearusnowusa.com/all-others/bosnia-terror-town-down>, Accessed on 21. July 2016.

whether their complex work will be sufficient to handle the international problem of extremism at least at a state level.

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