

ISLAMIC RADICALISM AND EXTREMISM AS A THREAT TO THE REGIONAL SECURITY OF THE WESTERN BALKANS

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Abstract: The paper analyzes Islamist radicalism and extremism as a security threat to the countries of the Western Balkans. Thanks to its geostrategic and multinational characteristics this area has perfect predispositions for the spread of Islamist radicalism and extremism. The authors will show how Islamist radicalism spreads, what are its manifestations and how much of a security threat it objectively represents for the observed region. We will present an account of the development and goals of Islamist radicalism and extremism through the analysis of historical facts from the war in Yugoslavia in the nineties of the last century, the arrival of foreign fighters, the establishment of Wahhabi communities and the departure of people to foreign battlefields. The purpose of this paper is to confirm that this security threat is not only a threat to the Western Balkans, but to the whole of Europe and beyond. The Balkans should only be the center and base of further Islamist activity towards other countries, all with the aim of spreading Sharia law and radical Islam.

Keywords: Security, Western Balkans, Islamists, Islamist radicalism and extremism, threat.

Introduction

The region of the Western Balkans is exposed to a series of security risks and threats that continuously endanger the observed region and the inhabitants in this area. Islamist radicalism and extremism represent a threat that has developed throughout history in this area from the Ottoman Empire until today. However, in the last three decades this security phenomenon has taken on a wide scale in the Western Balkans.

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Through the historical perspective of the Western Balkans, religious and national differences were often the cause of conflicts, unrest and wars. Unfortunately, global powers and local politicians misused religious and national differences for political and nationalist purposes. This is precisely the goal of the great powers, that due to the geostrategic position of the countries of the Western Balkans (Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Albania) this area is in continuous crisis regarding that security destabilization can occur at any moment.

The goal of the paper is to show chronologically, based on historical facts, how much of a security threat Islamist radicalism and extremism pose to the Western Balkans. That is, in which way radical Islamists threaten the security of the observed area, starting with war conflicts in Yugoslavia, the return of fighters from foreign battlefields, the establishment of Wahhabi communities and the formation of illegal Islamic parajamats.

The influence of radical Islam in the Western Balkans is increasingly dangerous. Risks and threats to regional security are greater due to the fact that in the areas of developed radical Islam, the economy is extremely underdeveloped, the economic-political transition has been prolonged, leaving behind an increasingly large layer of the poor population and a high level of corruption and organized crime is evident. In addition to national-religious intolerance and the national goals of certain groups which were not fully realized, this area represents an ideal place for creation of radical Islamists and extremists (Milošević, 2018, p. 507).

In addition to all this we must say that Islam is unjustifiably identified with fanaticism, extremism and terrorism. The reason for these views are conflicts in Islamic countries and acts of terrorism committed by Islamic radicals. Islam represents a peaceful and traditional religion and the politicization and abuse of Islam into Islamism is nothing but political violence (Mijalković, 2016, p. 29). However, it should also be emphasized that almost all terrorist attacks and similar forms of political violence that have occurred during the last three and a half decades in the geospace of the Western Balkans were carried out by radical Islamists and Wahhabis (Mijalković & Čvorović, 2018).

This paper shows the ways of spreading Islamist radicalism and extremism from the end of the nineties of the last century until today. Respectively, how much of a security threat represent the Islamic radicals through the Wahhabi communities and parajamats to the Western Balkans.

The emergence and spread of Islamist radicalism in the Western Balkans

Today, Islam is a widespread religion that is historically associated with the Arab world, the 7th century is the period that is considered the time of the origin of Islam as a religion (Stojaković & Galijašević, 2021). When we talk about Islam as a religion and as an ideology, it has the aspiration to achieve its religious goals and interests through certain political activities in the larger international field. Today, there is a great symbiosis between religion, politics and the state throughout the world, that applies not only to Islam but also to other religions (Milošević, 2018). Religion was often a cohesive factor between societies and contributed to calming tensions; on the other hand, it often encouraged conflicts and violence (Stevanović, 2022). Politicization, radicalization and abuse of religion occurs most easily in multi-religious environments and in territories where the religiosity of the population itself is at a high level (Vukelić, 2018, p. 52). In the observed area people identify and are emotionally attached to national identity and religious affiliation.

The historical origins of Islam in the Balkans are linked to the violent arrival of the Ottoman Empire. In the Middle Ages, almost all Balkan otherwise Christian countries, affected by the penetration of the growing and increasingly powerful Ottoman Empire, fell under Turkish rule during the 14th and 15th centuries. After that, under great pressure, the resident population is Islamized and converted to Islam, this all lasts until the 20th century in the Balkans, when begins liberation from centuries-old Turkish occupation (Stojaković & Galijašević, 2021, p. 249). In the history of the observed area, the process of Islamization took a great "devshirme" because this process represents the conversion of Christians to the Islamic religion or Turkification. In this way it comes to a certain transformation of ideological and political, cultural-civilizational, socio-economic and ethno-demographic nature (Vasić, 2005, p. 14).

The influence of the Turks in this area ended with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans and the end of the First Balkan War in 1912. This did not exclude the presence of Islam and its spread in the observed area. The conflict between Islam and Christianity is eternally present through war conflicts of global and regional scale, which did not skip over this area. The tendency towards the spread of radical Islam and the creation of Islamic fundamentalists contributes to constant political and security crises in the Western Balkans (Baškalo, 2023, p. 26).

The period after the Second World War and the acquaintance of Muslims with Wahhabism represents a turning point in the spread of radical Islam and the creation of their leaders. Even though Communist Yugoslavia tried to suppress religion, radical Islam through its illegal organizations such as "Young Muslims" spread radical Islam and aimed to achieve political goals through the abuse of religion (Stojaković & Galijašević, 2021). In the second half of the 20th century, Yugoslavia became a field of intensive activity by Islamic fanatics. Their main goal was to make the Balkans a base for Islamic fundamentalists so that they could more easily operate in Europe. The developed infrastructure, huge money received from Islamic countries, as well as the general intentions of Islamic fundamentalists to spread radicalism and extremism in this area contributed to a large extent to causing a bloody civil war in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Trifunović, 2007). In the 90s of the last century Yugoslavia was hit by a political and social crisis, which would lead the country into bloody war conflicts and a major socio-economic crisis. National political parties are founded, a multi-party system emerges and national leaders appear on the political scene, leaders who will implement national policy. All this contributed to the spread of Islamist radicalism and extremism throughout the Western Balkans. The security of the region is threatened, because the threats of Islamic fundamentalists from Bosnia and Herzegovina spread to other parts of the Western Balkans after the war. Radical groups throughout the Western Balkans that interpret radical Islam are becoming danger zones for the security of the Western Balkans (Baškalo, 2023).

As this area is at the crossroads of the civilizational cultures of the East and the West, throughout history it has always been at the "windsweep" of their conflicts and interests. The multinationality (Serbs, Croats, Bosniacs, Montenegrins, Macedonians, Albanians) are among the dominant characteristics of this area and multi-religiousness (Orthodoxy, Catholicism and Islam) of the population, which were often the cause of conflicts and unrest (Mijalković & Baškalo, 2024, p. 32). There are a number of factors in the area of the Western Balkans that contributed to the development of Islamist radicalism and extremism and later to the creation of terrorist organizations. The fact that a large number of terrorist acts, which were

committed in Europe, have some connection with the countries of the Western Balkans speaks sufficient about the extent to which terrorism is present in the Western Balkans. The war that took place on the territory of Yugoslavia in the nineties of the last century and the arrival of foreign warriors (mujahedin) influenced the creation of extremist organizations, the spread of religious and national hatred (Šikman, 2021). Paramilitary and parapolice units were established, which in most cases carried out terror and crimes. With the support of local actors and national leaders, their ultimate political-national goal was the creation of national sovereign states (Vladislav, 2019).

Islamic leaders have always viewed the area of the Western Balkans as an area of great strategic importance to them. They tried to find even more radical and extreme followers of their radical Islam in the Turkified Serbs. Thanks to the geographical position of the observed area and the complex national-religious structure of the population, the Balkans represent an ideal area for building an Islamic front towards Europe. Europe and America with their thoughtless and self-destructive political moves, influenced coming of a large number of Mujahideen to the Balkans during the war conflicts of the last century (Despotović, 2017).

The arrival of foreign fighters primarily from the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, but also from the territory of other Islamic countries to Kosovo and Metohija began in 1998 with the help of certain Islamic organizations. What is interesting is that during that period, the "Kosovo Liberation Army", which had been qualified as a terrorist organization until then, was removed from the list of terrorist organizations. This is sufficient evidence that global powers have great power and influence on the Western Balkans (Despotović, 2017).

The war in Yugoslavia and the arrival of foreign fighters contributed to the spread of Islamist radicalism and extremism. So today we have a large number of persons who remained in the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the so-called Sandžak and AP Kosovo and Metohija, which continuously contribute to the spread of radical Islam and the radicalization of new members of their illegal religious communities (Baškalo, 2023, p. 30).

Islamist radicalism and extremism through Wahhabi communities

Islamic radicalization in the Western Balkans is the process of creating Islamic fundamentalists and extremists. It is a process that gained particular importance at the beginning of the war conflicts on the territory of Yugoslavia in the nineties of the last century. A new era of radicalism begins with the arrival of mujahideen from Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Egypt, Algeria to the territory of Yugoslavia, regarding the spread of Wahhabism and radical Islam in the Balkans. The creators and members of Wahhabi communities want to create a pure Islamic state ruled by Sharia law. Saudi Arabia is considered to be the cradle of Wahhabism in the world, the first forms appeared in the 18th century in the province of Nejd (Baškalo, 2023). The arrival of about 7,000 foreign fighters (mujahideen, mostly veterans of wars in Islamic countries) in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1993 was crucial for the beginning of the spread of Wahhabism and radical Islam in the geospace of the Western Balkans. Wahhabi communities become zones of risk genesis for the security of people, countries and regions (Hamad 2007, p. 298).

For Wahhabis, there is no politics, but it is a political position. They do not recognize concepts such as capitalism, socialism, liberalism, democracy, they are against political parties and voting. For Wahhabis, there are only two things a Muslim can do: the call to spread the faith, missionary work, and the second is Jihad, (holy war). It is estimated that in the

last almost three decades, about one hundred billion dollars were spent for spreading of the Wahhabi movement in non-Islamic countries, mostly for the construction of Islamic mosques, Islamic centers, religious schools and the spread of influence in the media (Konotar, 2020, p. 162).

Nevertheless, the influence of religious fanaticism and Islamist fundamentalism in Kosovo became completely clear during the nineties of the last century, when within the terrorist organization "Kosovo Liberation Army" there were many Islamist elements and mujahedin from various parts of the world (Stanar, 2012, p. 47). How far Islamist radicalism is spreading is shown by the event from 1998, when a high-ranking official of the Islamic Community of Kosovo called Albanians to jihad (holy war) against the Serbs through a loudspeaker during a religious ceremony in a mosque in Priština (Trifunović, Stojaković & Vračar, 2011, p. 216).

The Raška region in Serbia or Sandžak, as Muslims call it, is an area where the majority of residents are of the Islamic faith. The eternal aspiration of Muslims in Sandžak is to merge with Bosnia and Herzegovina, which would connect Muslims even more and enable them to spread Wahhabism. The tendency of their separation began in 1991, supported by the ideas of Alija Izetbegović. This was prevented in time and certain persons were arrested and convicted for preparing an armed rebellion. There was the formation of certain military formations, such as the Handžar Division and the Zulfikar Brigade, which included a large number of foreign warriors (Mujahedin, Arabs) who participated in the war on the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina. With the end of the war, they return to the area of the so-called Sandžak where they continue to spread Wahhabism and Islamic fundamentalism (Baškalo, 2023, p. 32).

If Saudi Arabia is considered the cradle of Wahhabism in the world, then Bosnia and Herzegovina is considered the cradle of Wahhabism in the Balkans. With the arrival of foreign Mujahedin fighters in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1993, Wahhabism began to spread to the local Muslim population. Camps are being formed all over Bosnia and Herzegovina for the acceptance and training of Islamic fundamentalists and one such camp was located near Travnik, which was commanded by a Wahhabi, one of the key people of Al-Qaeda, Abu Abdel Aziz et Muntasiba, known as Barbarosa (Baškalo, 2023).

How grateful the leadership of Bosnian Muslims and the Islamic community was for all that the Mujahedin did for the Muslims in 1994, is that Alija Izetbegović gave the village of Bočinja near Maglaj to the Mujahedin extremists who wanted to stay in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This village became the base and stronghold of Wahhabism in the country and perhaps in the Balkans, a unique state of Islam, a state within a state and a community that lives only according to God's laws. In addition to this village, Gornja Maoča also represents a Wahhabi community, where religious Islamist radicalism is spreading and training for jihad is carried out (Galijašević, 2007, p.101).

Wahhabism as a religious movement of fighters for Sharia law represents a great danger not only for the Western Balkans, but for global security. The spread of radical Islam through Wahhabi communities creates Islamic fundamentalists and fanatics. Trying to achieve their religious radical goals, they threaten the safety of other people, not only of other religions, but also members of their own religion. Behind religious goals benign political goals of certain Islamic countries are hidden. A special danger threatens young people who due to disordered state systems and poor financial conditions, easily fall under the influence of Wahhabi leaders (Baškalo, 2023, p. 33). The attack of a minor (a 15-year-old boy) on police officers in the Bosanska Krupa Police Station profess that it is true. The person entered the

police station, after which he killed one policeman (Serb nationality) and seriously injured another policeman (Bosniac nationality) with a cold weapon (knife). According to information from the competent authorities, the person is associated with certain Wahhabi communities.⁴

Fighters from foreign battlefields - potential terrorists

Terrorist radicalization is a dynamic process whereby an individual comes to accept terrorist violence as a possible, perhaps even legitimate, course of action. This may eventually, but not necessarily, lead this person to advocate, act in support of, or to engage in terrorism. Possible drivers of terrorist radicalization are varied and complex and combine in a unique way in each case. Terrorist radicalization and recruitment does not occur in a vacuum. It should be viewed as an interactive process between the individual and external influences, including terrorist propagandists and recruiters, broader developments in society, and the actions of public authorities (Popović, Šetka, 2024, p. 80).

By going to foreign battlefields radical Islamists become jihadists, fighters for jihad, the "holy war". In accepting and interpreting such a radical Islam, they are ready to do anything to achieve religious goals, behind which there are political motives. Thanks to the attitude towards the religion of the resident Muslim population in the area of the Western Balkans, Wahhabi leaders mobilize and indoctrinate followers who are ready to lay down their lives for the religion (Baškalo, 2023).

Deliberately and systematically, they are ready to bring their nation into the problems faced by Islamic countries and influence the resident Muslim population to take an interest in the problems of Islamic countries will not have a positive effect on the stability of this area. Bringing the conflicts and problems of Islamic countries closer to Bosnia and Herzegovina is nothing more than destabilizing the country. And having such an attitude that Islam is the only correct religion and that one should fight against other religions is nothing but religious fanaticism (Galijašević, 2007).

A major role in the process of recruiting fighters in the Western Balkans contributed "international jihadists" who preached extremist Islam. This was done by veterans of wars in Islamic countries, who had great experience and who were in the war on the territory of Yugoslavia. After the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina, certain illegal Islamic communities were formed in the towns of Gornja Maoča and Ošva and later throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina. The characteristic of these communities is that they are isolated from legal Islamic communities and that they preach radical Islam. Their leaders, religious and ideological authorities in such places indoctrinate people to go to foreign battlefields. The most famous leaders of greater influence are Nusret Imamović and Husein Bosnić, who was sentenced to 7 years in prison for recruiting fighters for foreign battlefields⁵. The Western Balkans, even

⁴ Read more: "Bloody feast: A policeman in Bosanska Krupa was attacked by an Islamic extremist", https://www.glassrpske.com/lat/hronika/hronika_vijesti/krvavi-pir-policaјce-u-bosanskoј-krupi-na-pao-islamski-ekstremita/ 548303 downloaded: 28 October 2024

⁵ The Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina handed down the first-instance verdict which Husein Bilal Bosnić sentenced to seven years in prison for the criminal offense of inciting terrorist activities, recruiting for terrorist activities and organizing a terrorist group. "Judgment of the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina: Husein Bilal Bosnić sentenced to seven years in prison", <https://www.klix.ba/> retrieved: 9 September 2024.

according to the official reports of the State Department, represents a place where people are radicalized and indoctrinated for foreign battlefields. There is a large number of extreme organizations and Wahhabi communities that carry out radicalization and spread radical Islam. In most cases it is done by trained and educated members of Salafi communities, who have a lot of financial support from Arab countries. Radicalization follows new ways of indoctrination so that they use modern technology and social networks that are accessible to everyone. In this way, the first stage of radicalization begins, and this process ends with the creation of an Islamic extremist ready to go to foreign battlefields with the aim of helping his brothers who defend Islam (Mijalković & Baškalo, 2024).

According to the number of inhabitants and in comparing to other European countries AP Kosovo and Metohija, Bosnia and Herzegovina and North Macedonia have had the highest rate of mobilization in jihadist terrorist organizations since the beginning of Syrian armed conflict (Shtuni, 2016). Statistical data also show that the trend of returning foreign fighters is the same and that around 500 people have returned to the mentioned countries. At the same time there are 1,500 returnees to the countries of the European Union with a cumulative population of 500 million inhabitants (Schmitt, 2018). The Western Balkans is the region in Europe with the highest concentration of returned foreign fighters from foreign battlefield, and the return trend is unpredictable and constantly increasing. Kosovo and Metohija is at the top of the list, with 134 returnees per million inhabitants. North Macedonia follows with 73 persons per million inhabitants. If it is known that in the United Kingdom there are six returnees per million inhabitants and in Germany and France four returnees per million inhabitants, this clearly shows the importance and threat of the wave of returnees from foreign battlefields to the area of the Western Balkans (Shtuni, 2019).

In addition to the threat that Wahhabi communities as recruitment centers for going to foreign battlefields represent, the question of their return to the territories of the Western Balkan countries also arises. In addition to the fact that they will most likely not give up their, now certainly even more radical views and convictions, they also have the experience of participating in hybrid armed conflicts and the use of modern technology in warfare. Thus, they have predispositions for successful radicalization of new fighters, for founding new or joining existing radical cells, but also for violent actions against non-Muslim people and against the constitutional order (Fitsanakis, Trifunović, Nomikos, Stamevski & Cupcea, 2023).

In order to adequately approach the returnees from the battlefield and their families, it is necessary for a multidisciplinary team of experts to be well trained. This would mean that they should have knowledge in the field of security, criminology, psychology and other fields, but also that they should have all the necessary skills to identify, for example, the degree of radicalization of the individual or determine his mental state. In order to make an adequate assessment, cooperation between different experts is needed, it can sometimes be a challenge (Čorić & Obrenović, 2024, p. 21). Returnees from foreign battlefields represent an objective threat to the security of the Western Balkans and in order to be able to control this threat the cooperation of all institutions is necessary.

Parajamats - centers of Islamist radicalism

Religious extremists believe that religion is an aim in itself and all they want is to impose their rule. They do not fight against evil, nor seek new practical solutions, nor scientific truths that would make their life easier. On the contrary, they often deny them and if they are

discovered, religion offers them strict rules and convincing justifications, that is necessary to change currently difficult way of life. Extremism offers resources, networking and a target, which gives meaning to a difficult life and extremism is most often accepted in conditions of poverty and social disturbance (Mijalković, Bajagić & Mančević, 2023).

Radical Islamism and extremism are not only a threat to the countries of the Western Balkans, but are a threat of global proportions. Unfortunately, due to the historical events of the spread of Islam, the Western Balkans have geostrategic predispositions to be the base of Islamists for further action throughout Europe and the world. It is the socio-political disintegration, economic-social disorder and national-religious intolerance of the wider post-conflict area that favors the spread of radical Islam and the creation of extremists. Some Islamic countries support them in this, which makes the problem more international. The politicization and abuse of religion is evident, which was assessed as the most effective form of radicalization, precisely because of the population's devotion to religion and ethnic identity. Wahhabi communities are leading in this (Mijalković & Baškalo, 2024, p. 46).

Behind that radical Islam that is spreading in parajamats are hidden political goals. The lack of political will, the ineffectiveness of state institutions to prevent this kind of action by certain individuals contributed to the spread of parajamats and a larger number of their supporters. All together contribute to the negative reform of the Balkan Muslims, that leads to the politicization of religion. Thanks to such an interpretation of Islam and the extreme attitudes of their leaders and preachers, parajamats are justifiably considered a security risk in the Western Balkans (Milošević, 2018).

At the head of the parajamats, there are persons who have extremely radical views, who teach their followers that they must adapt their lives to the Sharia interpretation of Islam. It is precisely parajamats that represent the place where the radicalization and religious indoctrination of persons who later become extremists are ready to use violence to achieve the goals of their brothers and their religious communities, all under the pretext that it is a fight for Islam and Allah. And that is precisely what is the worst for a religion and a believer to be misused for political purposes and goals (Pejkić, 2021).

Islamic fundamentalist movements have gained a visible influence in many countries, especially in North Africa, Europe and the Middle East and a striking example in this regard is Austria's decision since June 2018 to close seven mosques, six run by an Arab religious community and a mosque in Vienna run by a Turkish far-right organization. Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz, explaining the decision, states the following: "In our country, there is no place for parallel societies, for political Islam and radical trends."⁶ This is an excellent example of how organized and sovereign states protect their security.

Today, fanaticism and fundamentalism are more and more associated with Islam, primarily because of major conflicts in Islamic states, but also because of the large number of terrorist acts committed by members of the Islamic state. All this contributes to opinions about Islam as a radical religion and Muslims as extremists (Mijalković, 2016). Of course this cannot be generalized, because Islam is a traditional religion and Muslims are believers who respect and love their religion. However, due to the actions of some individuals, organization and even a quasi-state, Islam can receive the epithet of fanaticism and fundamentalism (Baškalo, 2023).

⁶ "Austria closes seven mosques and expels imams", <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/>, retrieved: 17 October 2024. year

The Western Balkans is an area which is of special significance for expansion of Islamist radicalism and extremism from the perspective of Islamists. Parajamats represent the places of their activity and the creation of new extremists or potential terrorists. Competent institutions and the legal Islamic community should be the first in the fight against Islamist radicalism and extremism. Only in this way the further spread of this security problem can be prevented (Amidžić, 2017).

Only in the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina there are 38 parajamats that are not under the control of the Islamic community. After some discussions, a few of them agreed to be under the jurisdiction of the Islamic community, but 22 parajamats reject the authority of the legal Islamic community.⁷ Why do these parajamats exist and what is their purpose, the question is for the security and political system of Bosnia and Herzegovina?

It is clear that the parajamats in the area of the Western Balkans have the support of Islamic countries and even from certain political actors. The spread of radical and extreme groups in these areas will threaten not only the non-Muslim population, but also Slavic Muslims. It is necessary to separate traditional Islam from Islamism and radical Islamists that were created under the influence of foreign fighters. If this is not done, we will always have the risk of destabilization and renewed national conflicts in the geospace of the Western Balkans (Baškalo, 2023).

The parajamats that are developing and expanding after the war conflicts of the 1990s in the Western Balkan countries are zones of potential conflicts. We must not turn a blind eye to this threat, especially since it has been proven that every terrorist act committed on the territory of the Western Balkans was carried out by a person who was a Wahhabi or a sympathizer who attended their gatherings (Wahhabi communities and parajamats as recruiting centers) or is a returnee from a foreign battlefield (Mijalković & Baškalo, 2024, p. 46).

Conclusion

Islamic radicals represent an objective threat to the security of the Western Balkans. The fact that all acts of terrorism committed in the Western Balkans were committed by members of Wahhabi communities or their supporters speaks about the danger of this security threat. The majority of terrorist acts in Europe have a certain connection with Bosnia and Herzegovina (the person has BiH documents, the terrorists stayed in BiH for a certain period, weapons from the territory of BiH...) confirms that Islamists are not only a regional threat but a threat of wider proportions.

The goal of the Islamic radicals is clearly visible, they want to dominate the area of the Western Balkans, in order to create an Islamic state under Sharia law in which there is no other religion than Islam. This is the historical aspiration of certain political centers of the Middle East, but also of certain groups in the observed area. The environment and security issues in the Western Balkans favor the spread of Islamist radicalism and the creation of Islamic bases throughout the Western Balkans.

⁷ Out of the 38 groups of "parajamat", with who the representatives of the Islamic Community in BiH had a discussion about inclusion in the legal system of activities of this Community, 16 of them accepted the protocol and inclusion, while the representatives of 22 groups refused it. "More than half of the illegal congregations refused to enter the Islamic community", <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org> retrieved: 9 October 2024. year

The area that came out of a bloody civil war and the rhetoric of war is present every day and after 30 years of war, favors the creation of new Islamists and extremists. National-religious intolerance, economic-social disorganization, social insecurity, frequent political turmoil, the growing gap between the rich and the poor citizens deepen the crisis in this area, which represents an ideal ground for the spread of Islamist beliefs and attitudes. All these are factors that contribute to the more complex security situation and destabilization of the Western Balkans.

Wahhabi communities and parjamats represent hot spots in the Western Balkans. From these communities people go to foreign battlefields, commit terrorist acts and spread Islamist radicalism and extremism. The goal of these illegal Islamic communities is that through the spread of radical Islam create as many radicals and extremists as possible. Such radicalized persons should achieve the goals of the Islamists and be the first fighters in the creation of their Islamic state, which should be the base for the further activities of the Islamists and their expansion towards Europe.

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