

Speech of
HIS EXCELLENCY MR. ALIJA IZETBEGOVIC

President of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina
Winner of King Faisal International Prize 1993
For Service to Islam

*In the Name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate
Thanks be to Allah, Peace and Prayers be upon his Messenger*

Your Royal Highness the Crown Prince,
Your Highnesses
Dear Brothers and Friends

Al Salamu Alaykum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa Barakatuh

Receiving the King Faisal International Prize for Service to Islam it is my great honour and duty to express my sincere gratitude to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Fahd bin Abdul Aziz, for his kind patronage and hospitality and for his benevolent interest in achievements that serve mankind.

I take this opportunity to express my appreciation for the noble deed of the late King Faisal bin Abdul Aziz, for whom this Prize has been named.

I am also deeply grateful to His Royal Highness Prince Khalid Al-Faisal, Chairman of the King Faisal International Prize and the members of the Selection Committees who found the recipients worthy of this Prize.

Your Royal Highness the Crown Prince, Your Highnesses, Dear Brothers and Friends, Islam teaches us that we all originate from one man and one woman, that we have been divided into peoples and tribes only to know and understand one another. We are taught to guard and protect human life and nature by preserving and cultivating those values that we all recognize as universal. Therefore the achievements in Science or Arts

or other fields are service to Islam and hence to mankind. Promoting peace among men and preventing hatred and destruction is Service to Islam.

It is because men can choose between good and evil that these values must be cherished, taught and cultivated everywhere and every day. It is when these values are forgotten that man abandons the law of his creator and sets on the path of evil and destruction. My country is living proof of what blind aggression and indifference to the suffering of other human beings can do to life on earth.

The people of Bosnia-Herzegovina have been living for centuries on this point where East and West meet, trying to build a bridge of tolerance and understanding between the two worlds. Now they are severely punished and even the traces of this noble human endeavour are turned into ashes. The Bosnian Muslims in particular are being killed and expelled for no other reason than because they are Muslims. Still they are also winners for they endure against all odds in their heroic battle against the forces of darkness, hatred and destruction.

I consider therefore all those who now suffer in Bosnia, children, women and men to be recipients of this Prize.

I also pray that this event today will be an encouragement and new impulse to all men of goodwill to improve our existence on earth and to better serve our creator by protecting his creation and above all by promoting peace.

Let me therefore greet you with the universal greeting:
Peace Be Upon You.

Assalamu Alaykum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa Barakatatuhi.