

ISLAMICITY INDICES COUNTRY REPORT 2019

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

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I. Executive Summary

There is a huge dichotomy between what Islam teaches and what Muslims, all around the world, practice. It seems that Muslims do not practice what they preach. In other words, they do not 'walk the talk' as they should be according to the Islamic teachings and commands stipulated in the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet (the tradition of Prophet Muhammad).

This unpleasant reality is confirmed year after year. Namely, according to the latest Islamicity index 2019, New Zealand continues to dominate the index that measures reflections of Islamic teachings, values and institutions. The top list is dominated by the Western, non-Muslim countries. As was the case in previous years, countries with Muslim majority did not perform well and according to the results their practices, values and institutions do not reflect Islamic teachings of the Quran and Sunnah.

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) is performing well when compared to other Muslim-majority countries. Her overall ranking on the Index has improved dramatically from position 90 in 2015 to position 59 in 2017. However, ever since 2017, the position of BiH is deteriorating slightly as her position was 60 and 66 in 2018 and 2019, respectively. In comparison to 2018, BiH is failing in her performance on all measures. It does not come as a surprise since the country is in a very difficult and complex situation from economic, political and social dimensions as no new government has been appointed since the last election that took place in October 2018. Besides domestic issues, BiH is also faced with the migration crisis as many migrants, on their way to the European Union, get stuck in the western region of BiH.

II. Scores and Ranking: The Case of Bosnia and Herzegovina

The Islamicity index consists of a number of indices that together represent quantitative measures of adherence to Islamic teachings, values and institutions. In essence, it consists of four broad indices — i) economic; ii) legal and governance; iii) human and political rights; and iv) international relations. Finally, these indices are all combined into a fifth overall index. Here, we will briefly discuss the performance of BiH taking into consideration not only the latest index 2019, but also indexes from 2015-2018 period for comparative purposes. Below, we are going to discuss all of them briefly.

Table 1: Islamicity Index - The Case of Bosnia & Herzegovina

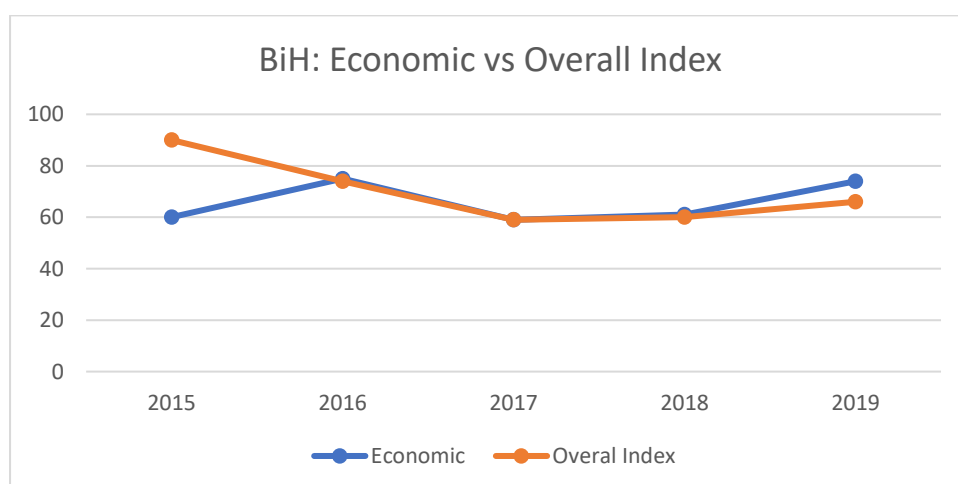
| Country | Year | Overall Index | | Economy | | Legal and Governance | | Human and Political Rights | | International Relations | |
|---------|------|---------------|-------|---------|-------|----------------------|-------|----------------------------|-------|-------------------------|-------|
| | | Rank | Score | Rank | Score | Rank | Score | Rank | Score | Rank | Score |
| BiH | 2015 | 90 | 4.38 | 60 | 5.27 | 117 | 3.46 | 84 | 4.69 | 67 | 5.33 |
| BiH | 2016 | 74 | 4.80 | 75 | 4.65 | 79 | 4.43 | 74 | 4.74 | 27 | 6.53 |
| BiH | 2017 | 59 | 5.17 | 59 | 5.49 | 93 | 3.88 | 60 | 5.64 | 26 | 6.71 |
| BiH | 2018 | 60 | 5.15 | 61 | 5.43 | 92 | 3.89 | 50 | 6.00 | 61 | 5.56 |
| BiH | 2019 | 66 | 4.90 | 74 | 4.98 | 96 | 3.62 | 53 | 5.67 | 74 | 5.16 |

i. Economic Index

In general, when comparing to the previous year, Bosnia and Herzegovina has significantly underperformed on all indices. In particular, when it comes to economic indicators, BiH is ranked 74 in 2019. It is a sharp decline from rank 61 in 2018 and is the second worst rank for BiH since 2015 (it was ranked 75 in 2016). The overall socio-political and economic instability, as a result of political inactivity and confrontations on all levels of the government, can be connected to these worrisome results.

From Figure 1 below, it can be seen that the economic performance of BiH is pretty much mimicking the overall index performance over the years, except 2015 and 2019 that they are moving slightly in opposite directions.

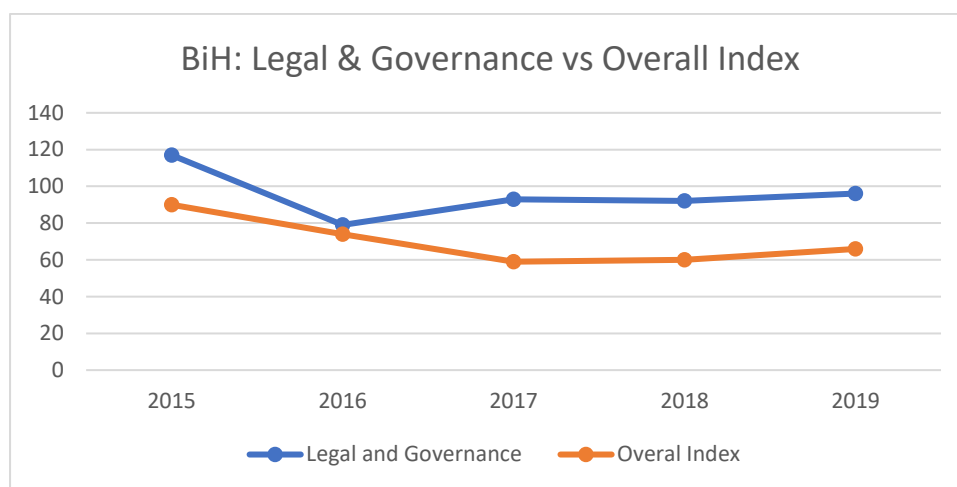
Figure 1: BiH: Economic vs Overall Index



ii. Legal and governance indices

When it comes to legal and governance indices in the case of BiH, it can be seen that ever since 2016, her performance in this regard are worsening. An increasing number of ongoing legal cases that remain unsolved, a huge bureaucracy that is hindering all sorts of development, pervasive presence of corruption at all levels of government, and obsolete legal regulations combined with weak enforcements are but few issues that are negatively affecting these indices as well. BiH is in a dire need of a general overhaul of the existing systems, including but not limited to legal and governance frameworks currently in place. Without a proper legal system and responsible governance, there will be no prosperity.

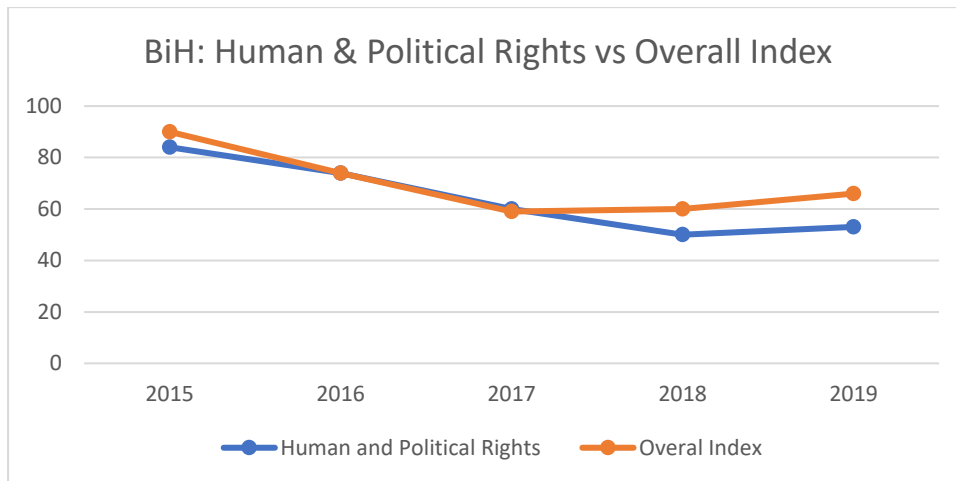
Figure 2: Legal & Governance vs Overall Index



iii. Human and Political Rights

Human and Political Rights Islamicity Index declined slightly since 2018 as well. Despite that and according to Human Rights Watch (HRW), BiH shows little improvement in protecting people’s rights. Media freedom is compromised and the country is faced with gender-based violence. As of now, the Bosnian constitution is found to be discriminatory when it comes to Jews, Roma, and other minorities. Even though, there is a decision by the European Court of Human Rights on the issue, it is yet to be implemented and necessary amendments to be made to the constitution. In short, there is a great room for improvements when it comes to human and political rights in BiH.

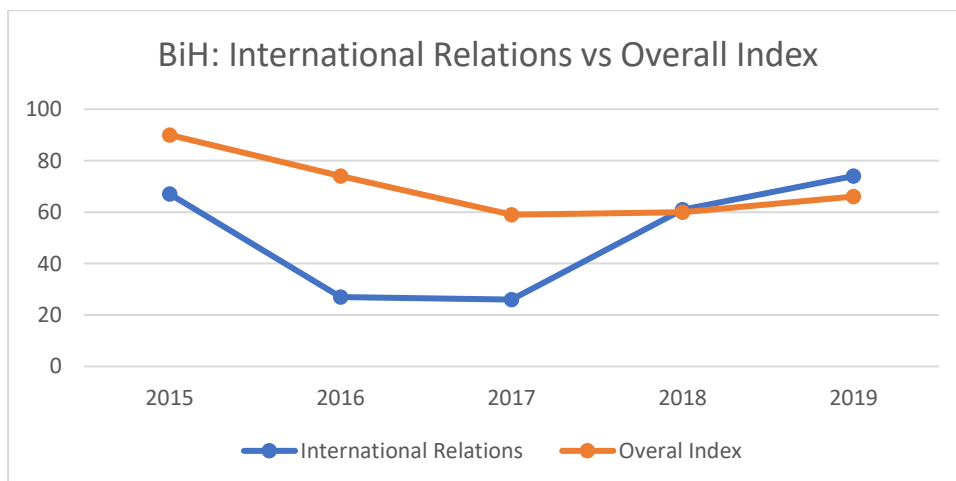
Figure 3: Human & Political Rights vs Overall Index



iv. International Relations

BiH is failing to advance its position in the international arena as her position on the international relations indices is sharply declining over the years. Her position on this dimension was 26 in 2017 and fell to 61 in 2018 and further to 74 in 2019. Again, her two entities' government that work in dissonance, more often than not, and non-existence of state-level agenda contribute to the overall underperformance of BiH in this regard. A more proactive and determined actions are needed to improve overall position of BiH when it comes to international relations. Unfortunately, given the current political establishment, this may not take place for years to come.

Figure 4: International Relations vs Overall Index



v. Overall Index

All in all, compared to 2018, BiH failed to improve its position based on the Islamicity Index. In all its dimensions (economic, legal and governance, human and political rights, and international relations), BiH's position deteriorated. Looking at percentage change relative to 2018, BiH declined by 8.29%, 6.94%, 5.50% and 7.19% with regard to economic, legal and governance, human and political rights, and

international relations indices, respectively. Her overall ranking deteriorated by 4.58%.

Table 2: Islamicity Index - Comparative Analysis

| Description | Overall | Economy | Legal and Governance | Human and Political Rights | International Relations |
|-----------------------------------|---------|---------|----------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| All Countries (151) | 4.50 | 4.88 | 4.75 | 4.58 | 5.10 |
| OIC Countries | 3.39 | 3.65 | 3.16 | 3.10 | 3.91 |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | 4.90 | 4.98 | 3.62 | 5.67 | 5.16 |
| Non-OIC Countries | 5.03 | 5.05 | 5.24 | 5.44 | 5.43 |
| % Change Relative to 2018 for All | -0.04 | 0.02 | -0.02 | -0.05 | 0.02 |
| % Change Relative to 2018 for OIC | 0.03 | 0.04 | 0.06 | -0.13 | 0.16 |
| % Change Relative to 2018 for BiH | -4.85 | -8.29 | -6.94 | -5.50 | -7.19 |

In contrast, BiH occupies a fairly high position, at least in relation to other countries with the Muslim-majority population. The average ratings of the Islamic indices for BiH are well above the average ratings of other Muslim-majority countries covered by this analysis. Moreover, the average scores of BiH are higher than the average scores of all countries covered by the Index in all dimensions but legal and governance where it is ranked much lower than the average.

However, when compared to non-OIC countries, BiH is below the average scores on all dimensions. Having said that, it seems that BiH is underperforming when compared to her regional countries. This is an indicator that policymakers in BiH need to take serious steps in improving her overall scores that would bring about the overall prosperity and make her more in line with Islamic teachings, values and institutions.

III. Concluding Remarks

The Islamicity Index is a multidimensional benchmark aimed at assessing a society's adherence to the teachings of the Qur'an and the practice of the Prophet Muhammad. It provides a compass and a benchmark for countries to build effective institutions to improve their social, economic and human rights performance.

Bosnia and Herzegovina, although relatively well-positioned compared to the majority of the OIC countries, is witnessing negative trends on all dimensions of the Islamicity Index. These trends are worrisome and should be tackled by the government as soon as possible. Implementing Islamic teachings, values and institutions – as indicated by the Islamicity Index report – would bring about necessary changes and much needed socio-economic and political progress.

In other words, what is needed is the best implementation of rules, regulations and guidelines of Islam. These will lead to more effective institutions that embody freedom and are fair, just, progressive for the economy, respective of human and political rights and in harmony with the international community. Only then, will we see the light at the end of the tunnel.

However, given the current socio-economic and political situation in BiH – with all its complexities – it is hard to expect these changes to take place soon. Consequently, these negative trends are expected to continue for some years to come.

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